

**The Reverend Caleb Parfect:**  
**Person, Power, Publishing**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the ministry of the Reverend Caleb Parfect and the communities that he served, based on the annotations he left in the parish registers and the publications he printed during his lifetime. Parfect served in the Diocese of Rochester, which has seen minimal academic interest in terms of micro-history at parish level. This thesis demonstrates the value of looking at these parishes in greater detail and reveals that there is a great deal of unexplored archival data that is of interest not only to the church historian but also the social historian. The thesis is split into three main chapters, *Person*, *Power* and *Publishing*, each exploring a different aspect of Parfect's life. *Person* covers Parfect's biography, which examines his whole life and route into ministry in the Diocese of Rochester. *Power* covers the fledgling workhouse at Stroud, Kent, along with Parfect's connection with the inception of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). The final chapter, *Publishing*, covers the period of Parfect's publishing career c.1748 to 1760. In constructing the thesis this way, it has been possible to demonstrate that Parfect's career was not only influential on the workhouse movement, but also in the communities that he served. Parfect's was a continued and strong Christologically based ministry that was steeped in the deep practical and pastoral needs of the communities that he served. His publications add weight to this hypothesis and establish Parfect as a true advocate of the Church of England and a most capable churchman who placed the care of his community at the heart of all he did.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Pops.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Ralph Norman and Dr Maria Diemling of the School of Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University for their support, particularly through the most difficult of times, and for their unfailing enthusiasm and their belief in me as a student.

I am particularly indebted to Dr David Hitchcock of the School of Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University for having an open door and the guidance which he offered. I must also say a massive thank you to the Chaplaincy team at Canterbury Christ Church University especially Rev. David Stroud who was a constant pillar of support during the later stages of my father's illness and subsequent death, which occurred at the midpoint of this research. His prayers and ministry were of a great comfort and instrumental in me moving forward and returning to my studies.

Finally, I must express my very profound love and gratitude to my wife Jane, my boys JJ and Merlyn, who have put up with a house full of books and papers and numerous trips to archives, and have sat patiently through narration of many parts and revisions of this research and have constantly encouraged me to complete this thesis. But most of all I am grateful to my late father David, without whose unfailing support and continuous encouragement and financial backing university would have been just a dream, let alone completing a Master's thesis. Thank you.

Pete Joyce, June 2019



## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Bap.</i>	Baptised
<i>BCP</i>	Book of Common Prayer 1662
<i>BL</i>	British Library, London
<i>Bp</i>	Bishop
<i>d.s.p.</i>	<i>Decessit sine prole</i> [Latin], died without issue, childless
<i>ERO</i>	Essex Record Office, Chelmsford
<i>Esq.</i>	Esquire
<i>KALH</i>	Kent Archive and Local History, Maidstone
<i>MALSC</i>	Medway Archives and Local Study Centre, Strood
<i>NFR</i>	Not fit for reproduction
<i>PPT</i>	Practical and Pastoral Theology
<i>Rev.</i>	Reverend
<i>SALSC</i>	Somerset Archives and Local Study Centre, Taunton
<i>SPCK</i>	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archives, Kew
<i>W&amp;SA</i>	Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham
<i>WALMR</i>	Westminster Abbey Library and Muniments Room
<i>WDM</i>	The Whole Duty of Man

## Introduction

In March 2018 Brodie Waddell of Birkbeck University of London published an excellent article called “Writing History from Below: Chronicling and Record Keeping in Early Modern England”. In the article Waddell demonstrates the importance of a ‘history from below’ and argues through examples of “people of modest social standing” that much can be learnt about our communities by looking at the journals, annotations and scribbles of those on the lower echelons of society.<sup>1</sup> This form of historical research came to the fore with EP Thompson’s book *The making of the English working classes* (1963), which has become a stalwart of historical research. For Theology there is little that corresponds to this type of exploration. Theology tends to focus on texts written by an educated elite and is driven by those who are arguably very much detached from most of the grassroots communities they purport to represent.

One area of Theology where this neglect of disadvantaged groups can become most noticeable is Social Theology. This form of Theology is continually being formed by its interaction with the world and does not seek to give a predetermined answer for any given situation. Those answers are the privilege of those immersed in the situation, in the here and now of the communities that they serve.<sup>2</sup> However, even this branch of Theology has grown into a myriad of branches in incarnational, liberation and practical and pastoral theology, and some of these approaches have evolved into abstruse academic discussions. This approach

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<sup>1</sup> Brodie Waddell, ‘Writing History from Below: Chronicling and Record Keeping in Early Modern England’. *History Workshop Journal*, Volume 85, Spring 2018, Pages 239–264  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbx064> (accessed March 24, 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Malcom Brown et al *Anglican Social theology* (London: Church House Publishing. 2012) 28f.



results in a debate centred on how communities should be treated, rather than a realistic view of how communities want to be treated based on the interaction of theology and everyday life in the community. As a result of this disconnected approach a vacuum has developed between written theology and the practical experience of rank and file ministry within the parishes of most Christian denominations and especially within the Church of England. By examining the life of one vicar we are able to start unlocking and reflecting on the complexities of what that ministry looked like at ground root levels.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the value of both a cross-disciplinary approach to this issue and reveal a surprising amount of knowledge and understanding of communities by studying closely the person who arguably had more access to the everyday life of early modern communities: the clergyman.

In the period of Parfect's ministry, clergy were involved in all aspects of life, where the old description of ministry as 'hatch, match and dispatch' applies very much as a statement of fact, although their role went further than that. In this period, the vestry meeting, which was the equivalent to a local parish meeting was chaired by the clergy, the overseers, who supervised payments to the poor were supervised by the clergy, and commerce and agriculture was monitored by the clergy in order to recompense tithes. The clergy had access to the poor of the community and the great estates of the gentry, and, in some cases, they even had magisterial responsibility for the community as Justices of the Peace. However, the clergy were not generally above the modest social standing that Waddell examines in his article. Many struggled to keep themselves and if they had a family the situation became a desperate attempt to keep poverty at bay. In fact, many were not that far removed from the overseer's books that they supervised. Without Queen Anne's Bounty or organisations like

Sons of the Clergy it is quite possible that many would have slipped (and some ultimately did slip) into debtors' prison.

This thesis will examine the records and work of the Reverend Caleb Parfect (1685-1770) who at various times held the perpetual curacy of Stroud, Rectory of Cuxton, Vicarage of Shorne as well as the office of Minor Canon at the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Rochester. He was also Chaplain to Lord and Lady Romney, a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and in later life a published author. The son of a weaver, Parfect was most probably a servitor at Oxford and someone whose livings were not valuable, and at the lower end of the scale even in the relatively poor Diocese of Rochester. Although Parfect held other livings before moving to the Diocese of Rochester, these will only be dealt with briefly in the biographical chapter, before I look carefully at Parfect's connection to one of the first workhouses in Kent and examine his publishing career.

The reasons for choosing to concentrate on Parfect's north Kent ministry are twofold. First and foremost, it allows engagement with an exceptional collection of archive material that has received little attention from within academia and therefore provides a rare opportunity for study and research. Parfect's note taking appears to be both distinctive and unique within the Rochester diocese archives. It is also well worth noting, at this point that recent research has also been unable to discover similar examples of such record keeping within the Church of England for the same time period. This makes Parfect an intriguing character and worthy of much more attention and research. This thesis will provide a unique guide to the source material and a solid platform for others to expand into providing a more complex and richer understanding of Rochester Diocese.

The second reason to focus on Parfect is the geographical location of his parishes on the north Kent Coast. Kent remains one of the most fractured counties in England in terms of local historiography. There is very little written about one area that can be applied equally effectively to another. For example, the business of the Weald is different from that of the Romney Marshes and both are equally different from that of the North Kent shoreline. The resulting situation is that much research is carried out on locations better attested in the greater number of archival sources and then adapted across the county. This means that parishes in the Diocese of Canterbury tend to attract more attention than those in its sister Diocese of Rochester. The consequent effect of this is that assumptions made for the Diocese of Canterbury are sometimes applied equally to Rochester. However, this is a gross misunderstanding which has somewhat skewed the information that we have about the history of the North Kent coast. Nigel Yates tried to redress this balance and worked extensively at the Kent Archives, Maidstone and was the first to start to look closely at the parishes of the Diocese of Rochester in the early modern period<sup>3</sup>.

However, as important as Yates's work is, it does little to really address the underlying issue that we have scant knowledge about the communities of the North Kent coast in the period 1719-1770 in comparison with communities in the Marsh and Weald, which have received a great deal more historical attention. The North Kent coast is unique because it sits on the two main trade routes to London. The old Roman road that is commonly known as Watling Street (A2/M2) starts at Borough in London and travels through Cray, Dartford, Rochester and Faversham before dividing at Canterbury for access to the three ancient ports. The other main arterial route is the River Thames, with its estuary beginning at Margate,

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<sup>3</sup>Nigel Yates et al, *Religion and society in Kent, 1640-1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd. 1994).

passing the Isle of Sheppey, Gravesend and into London through what were the great ports on which the fortunes of London ebbed and flowed until more recently, when container shipping moved the docks out to Harwich, Felixstowe and Grain. On these two routes we then find equally two important places, Rochester and Gravesend. Rochester, with its castle and bridge, has been since the time of Gundulf (and probably even earlier) the key defensive site for access to London and is possibly close to the site of the great Roman battle of Medway in 43AD. Gravesend is important because there all shipping traditionally (and still today) picks up the pilot in order to navigate up to London. Gravesend also had a charter which gave it the unique right of carriage of all passengers upon the Thames, and in the Victorian period the town would become a popular resort to visit and take the air, and the great and good would perambulate through the great gardens. As a result of the accident of geographical location, these two towns of Rochester and Gravesend therefore create a natural boundary which presents itself for further exploration of the towns of the North Kent coast

My thesis will mainly focus on the three parishes of Stroud, Cuxton and Shorne within the geographical area previously discussed. However, as will be demonstrated, Rochester and Gravesend are to my study. Rochester is the home of the Dean and Chapter and the Cathedral Church and therefore arguably is central to parish life. Gravesend is central to the narrative because, as stated earlier, it is the point where pilots alight and board vessels and where all traffic that left London had to pause. Therefore, Gravesend becomes in some respects a kind of 'English Alexandria' where all travellers and information passed through before being disseminated throughout the south east and on to London. When considering the early work of the SPCK, as will be shown below, this strategic position is of great significance and has an important impact on some of the discussions to be explored below.

The nature of the three parishes are very different and therefore they are each equally significant to illuminating the history of the Diocese of Rochester. Cuxton is the smallest of the parishes. By the end of the period under discussion, it had a population of just 92 souls and was little more than a hamlet, consisting of a few streets, an alehouse and the parish church of St Michaels and All Angels. The land is a mixture of chalk down, marsh and agriculture fields. Shorne is somewhat larger and, unlike Cuxton, which had a manor, it does not appear to have had a manor, though it had a significantly higher number of wealthier households than Cuxton (based on the information that has been collated). It had a mixture of industry, including agriculture, tanning and rope making. Like Cuxton, Shorne had an alehouse and the parish church of St Peter and St Paul but, unlike Cuxton, these are in the centre of the village community with the vicarage in viewing distance of both. However, Shorne's parish boundary covered a wider area and other alehouses and estates fell inside the boundary but were not particularly connected with village life; they do, nevertheless, crop up at times in both the parish registers and the notes that can be found in the tithe book.

Stroud is completely different from the other two parishes, though connected to both via road and to Cuxton via the River Medway. Stroud was predominantly the fishing village of Rochester, to which it is connected via the bridge. By the eighteenth century it had no estates or grand houses, which had been forfeited over the years. Stroud was a parish of three distinct geographical areas: Temple, which is the area where most of the population lived, borders the shoreline of the River Medway and probably contained the lowest income families; the area around the Turnpike (Watling Street); and the outlying areas. Stroud had

several alehouses and a central church dedicated to St Nicholas, the patron saint of fishermen<sup>4</sup>.

By examining the manuscript source material alongside the published local histories, the thesis will develop a greater understanding of the actual communities involved, and how those communities both interacted with the state and with each other. By drawing on primary source material from tithe books, parish records and overseer accounts, it is possible to view the parishes as Parfect encountered them: as an organic, shifting and at times dissenting group of people. These were communities that had to deal with the ravishes of smallpox, struggled to make ends meet, and at times resorted to deceitful means. The thesis will not, however, pass judgement or try to construct a theology beyond what is represented in the written accounts, because that would leave us open to the danger of re-baptising Parfect with a theology that was not his own. As the source material actually contains very little pertaining to his own thoughts beyond what he is annotating, one must be careful not to align him with beliefs he did not own. Before we can understand Parfect's thoughts and influences and the parishes a little further, it is necessary to provide a fuller biographical picture of the Reverend Caleb Parfect.

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<sup>4</sup> It has not been possible, owing to the time limitations of my research to construct a fuller picture of the three parishes. For all the parishes concerned much of the documentation has been lost, and although this paper will make some references to local history, it is no way intended to stand as a history of this area of the north Kent coast.

## Chapter 1: Person

### Early Years

**Caleb Parfect (1685/6 – 1770).** Caleb Parfect was the eldest boy of John and Martha who were married in 1675 in the parish of Shepton Mallett before moving the short distance to Farmborough, Somerset. Caleb was the third child of the marriage, preceded by Elizabeth and Ann and followed by Martha, Joice, Hannah and Owen. Searches in the parish records do not reveal anything significant about his childhood, other than that the Parfect, Parfett, Parfitt<sup>1</sup> families are the one of the most frequent names to be found in the parish registers of All Saints, Farmborough. It appears that Elizabeth and Owen were born in Shepton Mallett which shows the family had the means and motive to move between the two parishes; in this respect they were unlike the other Parfect families found in the Farmborough registers.<sup>2</sup> In 1763, aged in his sixties, Owen Parfitt mysteriously disappeared from outside his house. Being an invalid, it would have been impossible for Owen to just walk away and the reason for his disappearance remains a source of speculation.

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<sup>1</sup> All derivatives of the same surname, which originates in France and first appears in England borne by land holders in return to service at the battle of Hastings. A cross section of the Somerset parish records show various uses of the spelling by the same families and they do not appear to have become separate until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

<sup>2</sup> MALSC, Strood. P150b/1/4/1 & DRc-502; ERO, Chelmsford D/P/100/1/2; SALSC, Taunton D/P/Form 2/1/1 & D/P/She.c/3164 2/1/2.

<sup>3</sup> EDF Fairbrother *Shepton Mallet: Notes on Its History Ancient, Descriptive, And Natural; With Illustrations.* (Shepton Mallet: BRYT: 1872).

## Parish Records

At the time of Parfect's birth any parish records kept under the Canon LXX of 1604 were not standardised. Therefore, parishes got around the requirement that they should be bound by collecting together the baptism, burial and marriage registers and binding them together when there were enough to make up a volume. These volumes were then kept either in the parish church or dispatched to a central collecting point for the diocese; in more recent years they have been transferred to county archives. From the state of the various records that we have of the three parishes, one can tell that they were not particularly cared for and many have been lost over time. Another issue is that of spelling and use of generational names. Many people in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were illiterate and therefore spelling was generally phonetic rather than standardised, and, as previously mentioned, this resulted in families using many variants of the same surname, the spelling of which seems to have depended upon the clergy and parish clerks who wrote in the registers. The issue of generational names is more complex. In the case of the Parfett family, the forename John, for example,<sup>4</sup> appears in most generations. This results in many males with the same forename and surname appearing in the parish records and therefore construction of family trees of the period becomes a matter of best hypotheses, rather than absolute fact. However, using the information contained in the will of Caleb Parfect, it is reasonable to assume that Anne married a James Biggs, a local landowner, while Martha married a Robert

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<sup>4</sup> There are many others: Elizabeth, Anne, Martha, Christopher, Robert and William are examples of some other popular names in the Parfect family. Other families appear, from parish records, to have had similar generational continuity of names.



Witchell. Joice appears to have died at the young age of 26. Hannah moved to be with Caleb and is buried in the family tomb at Cuxton.<sup>5</sup>

### Education and Ordination

Apart from the life events recorded in parish registers, extensive searches in various archives have so far failed to turn up further records of Caleb's family until after he matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford in 1707.<sup>6</sup> It is not exactly clear how Parfect funded his studies. In later *alumni* listings, he is shown as a *plebeian*, though some like Waddell argue that this a Latin term that was only applied at a later stage to alumni records and was not something generally applied during Parfect's time at the college.<sup>7</sup> According to the history of the college library,<sup>8</sup> Parfect would have had to supply his own books, as the books in the library were for the use of the Master and Fellows only. By the time Parfect attended Balliol at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a small room was being put aside for the undergraduates. However, the library expenses in the period between 1670 – 1720 appear to have been calculated solely on the basis of running costs and in 1720 – 1740, after Parfect's time at the college, £90 (approximately equivalent to £18,700 in 2017) was finally spent on books by the college. These books were mainly classical, literary and mathematical with very little theology, and are probably the best guide to what Parfect could have read while at

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<sup>5</sup> TNA, London. PROB 11/962/207.

<sup>6</sup> John Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses; A Biographical List Of All Known Students, Graduates And Holders Of Office At The University Of Cambridge*. (Cambridge: CUP. 1922), 364.

<sup>7</sup> Brodie Waddell "Pleb: A History of The Word That Sparked 'Plebgate'" History Extra, <https://www.historyextra.com/period/pleb-a-history-of-the-word-that-sparked-plebgate/> (accessed January 24, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Penelope Bulloch "Library History." Balliol College, <https://www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/balliol-library/library-history> (accessed November 23, 2017).

Balliol. In addition to the cost of books, Parfect would have needed to meet the costs of his lodgings and food, master's fees and upholding the customs and standards of the college. Parfect must have given consideration to the costs involved and planned how he was going to fund his time at Oxford. It is possible he inherited some money and paid his way via that; alternatively, he was sponsored, but most likely, like his son after him, he was a servitor, which means that he would have carried out menial duties in the college and in return received college funding.

Parfect completed his BA in 1710, the same year the Bishop of Oxford, William Talbot ordained him deacon in the Church of England, at Christ Church Cathedral. Two hypotheses exist as to what Parfect was doing between Oxford and Rochester. Buchanan<sup>9</sup>, who, used the *Alumni Oxonienses* and copies Henry Smetham,<sup>10</sup> stated that Parfect was admitted to Holy Orders by Bishop Richard Willis of Gloucester at St Mary Alderman in the City of London in 1715.<sup>11</sup> It is unclear, however, what they think or speculate he was doing between 1710-1715 and 1715-1719. Based on the work of Hitchcock and data in the SPCK archive, and the details from his ordination testimonial,<sup>12</sup> it is arguable that Parfect was a schoolmaster at Uppingham School in 1711, before holding the livings of three chaplaincies in the Hundred of Shrivenham as well as being a schoolmaster. The role of chaplain and schoolmaster are not incompatible and show that Parfect had a plausible career path, in the

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<sup>9</sup> Odette Buchanan *Two Gentlemen of Strood*. (Rochester: City of Rochester Society, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Henry Smetham, *A History of Strood*. (Strood: Sweet and Sons. 1899).

<sup>11</sup> This assumption must be wrong. As Parfect had been ordained Deacon he was already in Holy Orders. The terminology used is the same as Buchanan and Smetham use in order to emphasis the point.

<sup>12</sup> W&SA, Chippenham. D1/14/1/5c/71 See also MALSC DRc\_Ac\_05 & DRc\_Ac\_06; KALH DRb/Am/2 & DRb/Vs.1; Acts Bk & Dra/Pa:Acts Book.

fact he was ordained deacon, took a role in teaching and was ordained Priest by Bishop Talbot in Oxford, before coming to Rochester.

### The SPCK and Charity Schools

Parfect's association with the SPCK continued throughout his career, and in about 1718/9 it moved into one of its most important phases. In his survey of workhouses Hitchcock states that:

Parfect first made use of the Society's services in relation to a working charity school established at Stroud<sup>13</sup> [*sic.*] in 1719. Parfect had previously received both the Society's yearly circular letters describing successful working charity schools and its pamphlets, which he distributed amongst his friends. When he had amassed the finance necessary to start a school, he turned to the Society for help in locating a suitable master.<sup>14</sup>

However, the SPCK references from Berkshire clearly show that Parfect had already established a connection with the SPCK before moving to Kent.<sup>15</sup> In all probability, Parfect was moved to the position of Minor Canon at Rochester Cathedral in order to fulfil a role at

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<sup>13</sup> The current spelling is Strood, Kent as distinct from Stroud, Dorset. In Parfect's time the spelling is Stroud.

<sup>14</sup> Tim Hitchcock, "The English Workhouse: A Study in Institutional Poor Relief in Selected Counties, 1696-1750," (PhD diss. University of Oxford, 1985) 163.

<sup>15</sup> Edith Jeacock, "Foundation of Shrivenham school 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century" (Shrivenham-monograph.1.S&DAG file 0501, item114 (1978):1-10).

the schools.<sup>16</sup> In order to explain this hypothesis, we must first examine the foundation of the school in Stroud. *The first report of the commissioners to inquire concerning Charities in England, for the education of the poor*, published in 1819, contains a reference to these schools. The background to the three schools in the Rochester diocese is found in the legacy of Sir John Hayward (1587-1636) who upon his death was living in St Margaret's, Rochester and bequeathed his manor house at Minster, Sheppey for the relief of the poor in the parish of St Nicholas, Rochester and at the decision of his executors other parishes. In 1718, Francis Barrell, a freeman of Rochester and an ex-Member of Parliament, was the last surviving trustee of the original Hayward legacy which had grown to £636 of South Sea stock. He appointed dividends in order to support three charity schools, which he had already set up.<sup>17</sup> On top of the evidence from the commissioners' report, the relevant deed poll for October 1718 further states that two of the schools were in the parish of St Nicholas, Rochester and one in the parish of St Nicholas, Stroud.

Through the commissioners' report we can gain quite an insight into the setup of the schools in terms of their educational aims. The difference in wages for the master / mistress

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<sup>16</sup> See Note 12.

<sup>17</sup> The First Report of The Commissioners to Inquire Concerning Charities In England, For The Education Of The Poor. Session 21 January-13 July 1819. Vol.X-A. First Report and Appendix.  
[https://books.googleusercontent.com/books/content?req=AKW5Qaewjq9kx5HWmR1xumDv6-5U82-IZN8155wXuzBCROrXoTv4p6oJMRzIMTUsM1sOJFUL8aLLUNHrjkmgLLft\\_S1y8vmNxxwRtlb9nL5jZW5s9Jzw-DSppgg2PZf4Wpbt-FW1SvlgryuiPfwKgYIZ3tm3u9Qh04S7Y4Arx6FQV0ly\\_Lppsm2JGJS3NCxztj4jCCzvb65836EOTMUJiDj5KHjHiG6\\_xwhTLbtawX-XKloJ9LkGcrUGPf5XAHcfKSK3ZbPqxa1z65A9yDs\\_87uqARpMfk3sg](https://books.googleusercontent.com/books/content?req=AKW5Qaewjq9kx5HWmR1xumDv6-5U82-IZN8155wXuzBCROrXoTv4p6oJMRzIMTUsM1sOJFUL8aLLUNHrjkmgLLft_S1y8vmNxxwRtlb9nL5jZW5s9Jzw-DSppgg2PZf4Wpbt-FW1SvlgryuiPfwKgYIZ3tm3u9Qh04S7Y4Arx6FQV0ly_Lppsm2JGJS3NCxztj4jCCzvb65836EOTMUJiDj5KHjHiG6_xwhTLbtawX-XKloJ9LkGcrUGPf5XAHcfKSK3ZbPqxa1z65A9yDs_87uqARpMfk3sg) (accessed November 27, 2017) 133.

also provides an interesting insight into the difference in the economic status of two parishes which are only separated by the width of the River Medway, but even in the twenty-first century have very different social economic circumstances, seen in both housing and employment, with Stroud being the poorer neighbour of Rochester.

- 1) St. Nicholas, Rochester – for 20 poor boys of that parish – to be taught to read English, to learn by heart the church catechism, some of the Psalms of David, the hymns of the church, writing and common arithmetic. Master 12L per annum.
- 2) Another same parish but for girls – taught the same as the boys (except writing and arithmetic) and also the use of the needle. Mistress 8L per annum.
- 3) St. Nicholas, Stroud – 30 poor children or thereabouts – 20 from Stroud and 10 from Frindsbury- to be taught as in other schools (except writing and arithmetic). Mistress 10L per annum.<sup>18</sup>

The disparity of the schools is best shown in the breakdown of salary per pupil

School	Salary P/A	Salary Per Pupil
St Nicholas, Rochester		
(Boys) Master	£12-0-0	£0-12-0
St Nicholas, Rochester		
(Girls) Mistress	£8-0-0	£0-8-0
St Nicholas, Strood		
(Mixed Cohort) Mistress	£10-0-0	£0-6-7

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 133.

It can then be shown that St Nicholas at Rochester had the highest salary. There are several reasons why this may be, with the most likely being the obvious gender pay gap. Conversely it is possible to construct an argument that the required additional curriculum required a master and was therefore accompanied by a social acceptance that the wage would be higher. However, although it lies beyond the scope of this thesis this, the cost of living, families of higher social status and the status of the master are areas of further research that should be explored further. It should be noted by this time the Sir Joseph Williamson School for the male children of the freemen for the instruction of mathematics, the arts and better grounding of navigation had opened in 1708. Therefore the schools in question must be seen as being for the lower echelons of society in both parishes and thus fall under the model of charity schools later promoted by the SPCK.

### The Livings and Growing family

Within months of being appointed Minor Canon at Rochester Cathedral, Parfect was again nominated by the Dean and Chapter to another living. On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1719, he was nominated to the living of *perpetual curate* at St Nicholas, Stroud, which is situated on the main road between Stroud and Rochester. This church has a long and interesting history and had a connection to several interesting moments in the history of Stroud. The Newark hospital had stood in its grounds and at one point it had links to the leper hospital and therefore, although Parfect's work for relief was new in his time, historically it was not new for the parish to be involved in the relief of the poor and sick.

Jacobs provides a useful overview of the term ‘curate’ in the eighteenth century, as it is different from the understanding or use of the term in the modern church. The term curate was used in four specific ways.

1. It was used to describe an apprentice clergyman. This was the role that Parfect had when he first arrived at Uppingham. It was very much concerned with the schooling of children. However, it must not be confused with the role of a master, which required a licence from the Bishop. However, to teach and help with writing and grammar was deemed a noble use of the time of somebody who was in the initial stage of their career and learning what a role in the established church would entail.
2. An assistant or reader to an incumbent. This would have been a position that was only available in larger parishes as most parishes struggled to support an incumbent.
3. The term was given to somebody who covered the *cure of souls* in the absence of the incumbent. This absence might be for a number of reasons including sickness, infirmity through age or ill health.<sup>19</sup> At times it was caused by holding two livings at the same time (plurality), however, it is important to note the difference between a curate put in place by an incumbent to take charge of the *cure of souls*, and a put

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<sup>19</sup> It was common for an incumbent to die whilst still in possession of the living, and stories exist of incumbents being carried into the pulpit and held up by clerks in order to preach the word, therefore curates were often placed to continue the care for souls.

in post to cover absence from the parish through non-residence leading to neglect of a clergyman's duty to the parish.<sup>20</sup>

4. Perpetual Curate or, as Parfect had held in another form at Longcote, Chaplain of Chapelries. In both cases the term refers to a member of the clergy who officiated in a parish, had be nominated to the post by the impropriator and licenced by the Bishop. The role was the same as that of a vicar or rector and the duties were expected to be carried out in a similar manner. However, a perpetual curate had no claim, income or benefit from the tithes of that parish.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, although Parfect was nominated for the living at St Nicholas in September 1719,<sup>22</sup> it is not until 8<sup>th</sup> June 1722 that Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, licensed him to the living. On the same day he was also licensed to the living of St Michael and All Angels, Cuxton, some two and half miles away. Although no details of an earlier licensing to the living at St Nicholas exist, it seems unlikely that he would have held the position for nearly two years as a nominee, therefore it is arguably more likely that the 1722 date is that of his licensing at Cuxton and re-licensing at Stroud. However, matters in his personal life discussed later might have brought him into contravention of the Canon of 1604 and thus delayed his licensing.

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<sup>20</sup> This is a much-debated area among scholars. A good introduction based on evidence is Nigel Yates, *Eighteenth century Britain 1714-1815*. (London: Routledge. 2014). Especially Chapter 5 'Condition of the established Church'.

<sup>21</sup> W.M. Jacobs, *The clerical profession in the long eighteenth century. 1680-1840*. (London: Routledge, 2007), 64.

<sup>22</sup> MALSC. DRc\_Ac\_05.



Although it is obvious that Parfect had a very full role in the church life of St Nicholas, especially in the setting up of the charity school and the workhouse, which will be dealt with in a separate chapter, he still apparently had time for a personal life which was going to play an important part in the social climbing that Parfect exhibited throughout his life. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 1722 he baptised his first child at St Nicholas, Stroud. The mother of the child was Bennet Walsall, whose father John Walsall was the attorney for the Sir John Hawkins Charity and a very prominent figure in the Rochester community and helped on a number of other charities.<sup>23</sup> In March 1722 Caleb and Bennet were married at Rochester Cathedral. At that time Bennet's parish is listed as St Nicholas', Rochester, as we can confirm that Parfect's home was at 1 College Yard, in the Precincts at Rochester, which he maintained until his death. From the records held in MALSC it is not clear whether he and Bennet cohabitated before the wedding or indeed whether there would have been any penalty for having a child outside of wedlock under the canon of 1604. Canon 34 of 1604<sup>24</sup> is explicit

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<sup>23</sup> Although working or connected to several charities, including The Watts Charity, most of the references that can be found to construct a picture of John Walsall are found in the John Hawkins archive held at MALSC.

<sup>24</sup> NO Bishop shall henceforth admit any Person into sacred Orders, which is not of his own Diocess, except he be either of one of the Universities of this Realm, or except he shall bring Letters Dimissory, (so termed) from the Bishop of whose Diocess he is, and desiring to be a Deacon, is Three and twenty Years old, and to be a Priest, Four and twenty Years compleat, and hath taken some Degree of School in either of the said Universities, or at the least, except he be able to yield an Account of his Faith in Latin, according to the Articles of Religion approved in the Synod of the Bishops and Clergy of this Realm, One thousand five hundred sixty and two, and to confirm the same by sufficient Testimonies out of the holy Scriptures: And except moreover, he shall then exhibit Letters Testimonial of his good Life and Conversation, under the Seal of some College in Cambridge or Oxford, where before he remained, or of three or four grave Ministers, together with the

on the conduct and quality of those called to be ministers. It clearly lays out exactly what the Bishops expected of their ministers and what sort of education they should have undertaken, their attested suitability for office and obedience to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England as laid out in the Book of Common Prayer 1662. However, the censure for those ordained but straying in public office is nowhere as clearly defined, as can be found in 7<sup>th</sup> Edition C26:2 of the current Canon of the Church of England<sup>25</sup> which clearly states that children outside of wedlock would be in contravention of the Canon of 1604.

The difficulty in making a firm judgment on whether Parfect was in contravention of canon is defining a public standard on marriage and procreation outside of wedlock. Stone argued that throughout the seventeenth century “emphasis [was] placed by the state and the law on the subordination of the wife to the head of the household as the main guarantee of law and order in the body politic”.<sup>26</sup> Certainly, in the case of the Parfect household we see less input from Bennet on the running of the household than we will see later with Parfect’s second wife Bridget. However, it might be that the social or clerical position of Caleb himself was different, and therefore it is reasonable to argue that Caleb’s rise in the clerical hierarchy forced Bridget to be more involved. Conversely, it can be argued was the amount of time Bennet spent with child, after the loss of Ann, prevented her from taking an active role in the

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Subscription and Testimony of other credible Persons, who have known his Life and Behaviour by the space of Three Years next before. [Do you have a reference for this quotation?]

<sup>25</sup> 2. A clerk in Holy Orders shall not give himself to such occupations, habits, or recreations as do not befit his sacred calling, or may be detrimental to the performance of the duties of his office, or tend to be a just cause of offence to others; and at all times he shall be diligent to frame and fashion his life and that of his family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make himself and them, as much as in him lies, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ.

<sup>26</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage In England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row. 1977) 202.

management of the household; in the five years that they were married Bennet gave birth to three further children. This means that for forty-five percent of the time Bennet was pregnant. No primary supporting evidence has been found as to whether the family was of sufficient wealth or status to have a wet nurse or help in raising the children, although as Caleb's income would have been at the lowest point in his ministry, it is unlikely that was an expense that could be met, and it is possibly one of the reasons that Caleb sought to increase the family income. This position of Caleb requiring help is strengthened by how quickly Parfect's sister Hannah made the move from Farmborough to residence in Rochester after Bennet's death.

The foregoing discussion must lead us to contemplate what the Church of England was like at the time. By the time that Parfect was ordained, the Church of England had to a certain extent resolved the problem of attracting men of adequate learning and social status into the clergy. However, it can also be argued that some, like Parfect, were still "permanently excluded from the style as well as the substance of the gentleman".<sup>27</sup> This discrimination resulted in some social division, as had been prevalent during the seventeenth century. This increase in professionalism which the Church of England had striven for since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century among the clergy led to clergy being more involved in clerical societies and serving on national bodies such as *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel* (SPG) and the SPCK. Despite this, figures for the Canterbury diocese 1720-1750 show that *plebeians* filled approximately twenty-four per cent of the livings, with an overall composition of clergy

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<sup>27</sup> John Rule, *Albion's People: English Society 1714-1815*. (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 48.

split equally between graduates from Oxford or Cambridge, showing that both universities could exert similar political influence at clergy level.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of income and social position it can be argued that improvement was also seen in this period and continued through to 1815. However, that this was not reflected so well in the Diocese of Rochester. Using the figures for 1762, Canterbury, York and London had bishoprics worth in excess of £4000 per annum. This figure is far greater than the figures for Rochester, whose bishopric was one of the poorest in the country, a poverty that was reflected in the value of livings. The *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum* (1768) shows that Rochester only had nine livings worth over £100 per annum, with three (Wouldham, Otteford and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster) valued at £200 and top of the list, showing the disparity between the top and bottom. The bishopric of Rochester is listed on the Kings' Books at £358 04 9 ½ with yearly tenths of £35 10 05 ¼. 115 (or 86 per cent) of livings were worth less than £50, and as such were classed as poor livings; this figure is against the national average of 52 per cent<sup>29</sup>. The poverty of these livings will become apparent the more we examine Parfect's ministry, particularly the two parishes that he held most of the time in the diocese. The livings of these two Parishes were composed as follows, with the neighbouring parishes listed to give an idea of the surrounding area.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Yates *Religion and Society in Kent*. (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer Ltd., 2008), 132

<sup>29</sup> 45. Viviane Barrie "The Church of England in the Eighteenth Century" *Historical Research*. 75, No.187 (2002).

<sup>30</sup> Figures are given in L S D. which was the currency of England till February 1971. For a fuller understanding see Glyn Davies, *A History of Money from Ancient Times to the Present Day*, 4th. ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press. 2010)

PARISH	KINGS'BOOKS	YEARLY TENTHS
St Michael and All Angels, Cuxton	£14 15 05	£1 09 6 ½
St Peter and St Paul, Shorne	£13 01 08	£0 06 02
<b>Neighbouring Parishes</b>		
St John the Baptist, Halling	£7 13 04	£0 15 04
St John's, Higham	£8 10 00	£0 17 00

Despite this restriction on income, it appears that Parfect, either through his own efforts or supported by his wife's wealth, appears to have settled into a reasonable standard of living. Parfect had two more children with Bennet, John (bap. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1724), who later became a vicar and Doctor of Divinity, and Martha (bap. 18<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1726) before the family was struck by tragedy. On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1727 Bennet Parfect (Filia) was baptised at Rochester Cathedral. The register notes "27 Mar. Bennet, d. of the Revd. Mr. Caleb Parfect by Bennet his (late) wife" on the same day there is an entry that reads "27 Mar. Mrs. Bennet Parfect, wife of the Reverend Mr. Caleb Parfect, was buried at Stroud by me R. Bp.", then "2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. Bennet Parfect (an Infant) buried Stroud". It should be noted that Parfect was not an isolated case, and that in both the of the parish registers kept by Parfect there are many accounts of an infant and mother being buried within a very short period and therefore demonstrates a normality of the period. No accounts of Parfect's personal reflections through this difficult time can be found among his writings; however, we do know that this is the time when his sister Hannah made the move from Farmborough to be with the family, perhaps to provide a mother figure for John and Martha, who were just three years and one year old respectively. Hannah's move also provides an interesting insight into Parfect's ministry.

Throughout his time in the diocese, Parfect acted as surrogate to the bishop for proving wills. In November 1727 the will of Mary Turner was proved. In the will, Turner bequeathed her part of Stroud Mill to her son Richard Tassell and left her house to Parfect, who was the sole executor of the will, with the will being witnessed by Hannah Parfect alongside a Johnathon Brown and William Best.<sup>31</sup> Although other examples exist of Parfect having family members and close acquaintances witness wills, this one is striking because studies have so far failed to produce a connection between Turner and Parfect that would account for such a large gift. Indeed, in his own will Parfect makes no such gifts, but passes the house in Stroud onto his daughter Martha.

#### Chaplain to Lady Romney

By 1727 Parfect was also Chaplain to Lady Romney, who had been Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Orange and whose husband was Baron Romney (Robert Marsham), the Whig MP for Maidstone who resided at Whorne's Place, which was five minutes' walk from St. Michael's at Cuxton and could be seen from all of the church grounds. No evidence can be found at present to define this role; thus, it is not clear if Parfect was chaplain to Whorne's Place or to Lord and Lady Romney.<sup>32</sup> It would be prudent to argue that as Whorne's Place is the manor of the village, one could reasonably expect the incumbent to hold the Chaplaincy there, but it should also be noted that the boundary with the next parish,

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<sup>31</sup> MALSC DE1210/T15 see DE1210/T15-T18 series for Stroud Mill.

<sup>32</sup>The present incumbent of St. Michael and All Angels, Rev. Roger Knight, who has worked on the history of St Michael and All Angels was unable to find out if chaplaincy at Whorne's Place was part of the incumbent's duties or if it was a secondary position bestowed on Parfect by either the Dean and Chapter or the Bishop.

St John the Baptist, Halling ran through the grounds of Whorne's Place. The first solid connection between Parfect and Whorne's Place comes in 1723. When Lady Hartley died in 1603 at Whorne's Place, a monument was erected to her and her infant son Thomas on the south wall of the sanctuary at St Michael and All Angels. On the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1723, the then Lord Hartley rode to Cuxton, where "some of the poor women of the place strewed mint upon the road out of their aprons."<sup>33</sup> Parfect oversaw this visit, but whether that was as Chaplain to Whorne's Place or as Rector of St Michael and All Angels is not clear. It is interesting to note though that a reference to Parfect in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1733, announced "A dispensation is passed to enable Caleb Parfect, M.A. Chaplain to the Lady Romney, to hold the Rectory of Cuxton and the vicarage of Shorne in the same county,"<sup>34</sup> which suggests that Parfect was a chaplain to Lady Romney rather than Whorne's Place as by this time the Marsham's had moved to the Mote in Maidstone.

#### Parfect's MA

In 1725 Parfect completed his MA at Emmanuel College Cambridge. Contra to Buchanan's assertion that this would have taken quite a bit of time for Parfect to study for his MA,<sup>35</sup> by the 1700's the Cambridge MA had become a sinecure, a position requiring little or no work but giving the holder status or financial benefit, in that the old requirement of seven years' study no longer applied. Students could, if they wished, gain a MA seven years after

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<sup>33</sup> Derek Church, *Cuxton: A Kentish Village*. (Sherness: Arthur J Cassell: 1976).

<sup>34</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*. Volume 3, October. Pg 551.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015016468293;view=1up;seq=10> (accessed March 13, 2018)

<sup>35</sup> Buchanan, *Two Gentlemen of Strood*. 33.

matriculating (having first graduated BA, but without any further study or residence requirements).

Parfect would, however, have been awarded his Cambridge MA by Incorporation, an arrangement by which a graduate of Oxford could be awarded a degree from Cambridge (and vice versa) without having to follow any course of study. There could be various reasons as to why students chose to do this. A common one was that they lived closer to Oxford (or Cambridge) than their original university and becoming a member of the other one would entitle them to use the University Library and other facilities. As Parfect held livings near Rochester this does not seem to apply, so one can only speculate about his motives. It seems very unlikely that he would have resided at Emmanuel College at all, other than for the purpose of taking his MA and perhaps brief visits thereafter. As to why he chose Emmanuel, rather than any other College, we can, again, only speculate; perhaps he was acquainted with one of the Fellows or had a friend who was a graduate of the College. Samuel Bradford, appointed Bishop of Rochester in 1725, had been a friend of the late William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury and formerly Master of Emmanuel, but this would be a very tenuous link.<sup>36</sup>

#### Workhouse, Stroud

In the same year Parfect published the first of his known tracts, *Proposals made in the year 1720 “... to the Parishioners of Stroud, near Rochester, ... for building a Work-House there; with an account of the good success thereof; and likewise of several work-houses in*

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<sup>36</sup> From private correspondence between the author and Amanda Goode, Emmanuel College archives, Cambridge. 2017.



*Essex, etc.*”, which accounts for the majority of the work that is attributed to Caleb Parfect in the later SPCK publication *An Account of Several Work-houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor: Setting Forth the Rules by which They are Governed, ... As Also of Several Charity Schools for Promoting Work, and Labour* published by the society in 1732. In this tract, Parfect lays out the proposals that were made in the vestry meeting 1720 at St Nicholas, Stroud, along with proposals for the expenditure, governance and the type of inmates that would be allowed within the workhouse. This will be discussed in depth in chapter two, *Power*, on the workhouse and SPCK as the two are intrinsically linked. I will argue that, while Stroud is not an isolated case, at the same time it provides a unique model which will be useful as a base for developing a better understanding of the inception of the workhouse in the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the eyes of the person who helped spearhead the movement. Until now this has remained a very under-studied area of theology. Although it still provides (along with the poor laws), our socio-political language, leading to the disenfranchisement which is still found 21<sup>st</sup> century commentary when looking at issues of poverty, single mothers and state benefit.

## Second Marriage

In 1730 Parfect married for the second time. This time he chose Bridget Poley to be his wife, again showing Parfect’s awareness and, arguably, Parfect’s connection with the higher-ranking families of the Rochester area. Bridget’s family played a major role in shaping the community of Rochester and the wider area. On one side of the family, Bridget’s paternal grandfather was Sir Richard Head, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet of Rochester (c.1609-1689). Apart from being MP for Rochester (1667-1679), he had played a role in the 1688 Revolution. As James II fled England, Sir Richard Head offered him shelter at Rochester and had been heavily rewarded by

the fleeing King. Although the 1688 Revolution is beyond the scope of this work, it is important to note that one of the defining causes according to Clark was “James II’s demand for an obedience that the church was ultimately unwilling to give (in spite of a professed support for the Bishops equal to that of Charles II). The rise of profound popular anti-Catholic sentiment led many to see no difference between the religious pluralism and toleration that James (like his brother) sought and the Roman Catholic hegemony which many assumed would be a mirror image of the Anglican one”.<sup>37</sup> With James II removed from the throne the battles over Tory and Whig control of the church dominated the turn of the century, in particular battles over Convocation and the preferment of livings. On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1688 the only military action of the revolution took place at Reading, however, paralysis or even desertion by both the army and navy and lacklustre leadership by James II, as well as the self-interest of the nobility meant that there was no real defence of the realm and by the following week James II was attempting to flee the country. On the night of 14 December 1688 it is likely that he stayed as a guest of Sir Richard Head at 69-71 High Street, Rochester; he then returned to Whitehall before returning to stay with the Head Family on 17<sup>th</sup> December. After a number of days and another meeting it was from some steps in Rochester, probably a private wharf owned by the Head family and contained in Common or Blue Boar creek, that James II took a skiff to Dover and eventually on to France.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> J.C.D Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Cambridge C.U.P: 2000), 72f.

<sup>38</sup> Wheatley quoting from *The History of England from the Accession of James II* gives the following description of the departure; “Fright overpowered every other feeling. James determined to depart, and it was easy for him to do so. He was negligently guarded, all persons were suffered to repair to him, vessels ready to put to sea lay at no great distance, and their boats might come close to the garden of the house, in which he lodged .... The arrangements were expeditiously made. On the evening of Saturday the twenty-second the King assured some of the gentlemen, who had been sent from London with intelligence and advice, that he would

Sir Richard Head, Baronet owned many lands including at Higham, which he left to the people of Rochester in his will. His daughter Frances married Thomas Poley Esq. (b.1642) and they had two sons (*d.s.p*) and two daughters, Bridget and Elizabeth. Elizabeth married into the Weller family of Tonbridge and it is that line of the family which seems to have retained the lands; certainly it was the second son of Robert and Elizabeth who took the title to Boxted and became George Weller-Poley of Boxted, Suffolk. While incidental, these connections remain important when looking at how Parfect conducted his business and later play an important part in understanding the vast will that Parfect left and then later the wills of both Bridget and John.

In 1730 Bridget and Caleb were married at Rochester Cathedral in a ceremony that appears to have been a grandiose affair. The register of the Cathedral church at Rochester list the registry entry as “Mr Caleb Parfect of the Precincts and Mrs Bridget Pooley of St. Nicolas, Rochester by Mr D’ Oyley. L.”<sup>39</sup> In essence, this date marks a turning point in Caleb’s ministry; although always a prolific annotator of the parish records in comparison with his contemporaries and his forbearers, his marriage to Bridget seems to have enhanced this as the notes and annotations increase around this date. Another notable fact is that Bridget appears from the available records to have had a greater involvement in his ministry. In the records

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see them again in the morning. He went to bed, rose at dead of night, and, attended by Berwick, stole out at the back door and went through the garden to the shore of the Medway. A small skiff was in waiting. Soon after the dawn of Sunday the fugitives were on board of a smack which was running down the Thames."

<sup>39</sup> MALSC *Transcription of the Register of Cathedral Church, Rochester 1657-1837*. Transcribed by Thomas Shindler, M.A., LL.B. Published in 1892. Page 33.

held in the Medway and Kent archives there is no information on Bennet or any indication of her involvement in Caleb's ministry, yet for Bridget we find regular bills submitted to the Dean and Chapter and the Diocese of Rochester for entertainment and sundries, applying to the Dean and Chapter for payment forthwith. These bills include East Lane Court, Maidstone; Ambree, Rochester; chaise and chariot hire; disbursements to servants as well as making up the Court books for all Courts. The bills span the period 1742 – 1761<sup>40</sup> and are an indication of Bridget's involvement in Parfect's ministry.

### Move to Shorne

In 1733 Parfect resigned the living at St Nicholas, Stroud and took the living of St Peter and St Paul, Shorne alongside the living at Cuxton. This plurality of livings was a necessity of the time, although it required a dispensation from the Bishop and an understanding that the care of the souls in both parishes would be fully met as required by the Canons of 1604. Jacobs has argued that “whilst most clergy did not hold many livings in succession, it was common for them to hold two or three livings concurrently...Pluralism, the holding of more than one cure of souls, ensured adequate income for clergy, and relatively satisfactory pastoral care for the parishes, especially parishes with insufficient endowments to fund clergy”.<sup>41</sup> Although much research remains to be completed in this area, as the data generally available for Kent is focused on Canterbury, it is clear that in this regard Kent presented some significant challenges, especially in the Diocese of Rochester. According to Yates, the Cathedral Church of Rochester had not fared well in the Commonwealth period and

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<sup>40</sup> DRc/FR/Sv/24A-24B; 27; 40-44; 45-60B; 61-66C.

<sup>41</sup> Jacobs, *The clerical profession in the long eighteenth century. 1680-1840.* 95f.

indeed at one time had been turned into “tippling house and a carpenter’s workshop”.<sup>42</sup>

However, it was not the damage to the actual Cathedral that primarily led to the situation, but rather the inexperience of the post-Restoration Cathedral Chapter, which had no experience of Rochester before the Commonwealth period. By October 1670 the Chapter had spent £9,910 of its reserve and about £1500 from bequests and public subscriptions on repairs.

Furthermore, although the land that was owned by the Cathedral pre-Commonwealth, what had been sold off during the Commonwealth was supposed to be returned to the Cathedral. Charles II had urged the chapters to be gentle when dealing with these matters. An example of the difficulty of dealing with the aftermath of land rights in the post-Commonwealth period can be given by the case study of Monk Wood, Wouldham. The land had been purchased by the tenant from the Commonwealth government for £230, not because the tenant believed in the Commonwealth but because fear of failing to provide for his family and potential homelessness left him with no other choice. At the Restoration he made a plea to the Chapter to pay the fines at a reduced rate because he had already lost his purchase fee. This situation was further compounded across the diocese by the loss or destruction of records in the Interregnum, which meant that the Chapter had difficulty in establishing what land or estates were in the possession of the Chapter before the Commonwealth. Although this happened many years before Parfect’s arrival in the diocese, the fact that the struggle to restore Fleet Bridge, London back to the Chapter was not resolved until 1787 shows that the finances of the diocese were still in the process of recovery during Parfect’s time, if indeed they ever did recover to their pre-Commonwealth value (and the diocese had been poor even then).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nigel Yates, *Faith and Fabric: A history of Rochester Cathedral 604-1994*. (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1996) 77.

<sup>43</sup> Yates, *Faith and Fabric: A history of Rochester Cathedral 604-1994*.

## Discussion of Sources

It is from studying the parish registers, tithe books, overseer accounts and terriers that Parfect left at Shorne and Cuxton (which have so far not been examined by scholars) that the scholar can best build a picture of Parfect's ministry. The books contained in the archives are full of annotations and notes in Parfect's hand and full of comments of great value to the social historian which provide an in-depth understanding of the struggles of parish life<sup>44</sup>. The following sample taken from a page in 1761/2 gives us an understanding of both the parish and Parfect:

### Burials:

- a) Hovey – a illegitimate child was buried Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> 1761 (Note. George Bolting Snr kept and buried this child in his vault, as the father of it. – Had now been married to the mother sometime.)
- b) Stranger – Poor woman found dead in road and her name not know. Was buried June 26 1761.
- c) Stranger – A poor travelling woman who died in Mr Day's barn and her name not known was. Aug 10 1762.
- d) Stranger – An idle travelling boy who died in a barn and his name not known was buried. Aug 24 1762.

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<sup>44</sup> Appendix 1 Is a copy of the Terrier for Cuxton, MALSC P108/3/4 showing the depth of detail that Parfect left to his contemporaries and is now of use to the modern scholar.

- e) Stranger – An unknown male person found drowned in Parish was buried.

December 30 1762.<sup>45</sup>

This is a small selection of examples that provides an interesting cross section of what historians refer to as a history from below. The first entry, relating to Hovey and Bolting, arguably has similarities to Parfect's own life. In the case of both Parfect and Bolting the child is born out of wedlock and then the father marries the mother later; however, what makes Bolting's rather than Parfect's child illegitimate is not so much a period of time or a major social attitude change but the passing of an Act of Parliament. In 1753 the Marriage Act was the first legislation in England and Wales to require a formal ceremony of marriage.<sup>46</sup> The Act provides an interesting turning point in relation to how marriages were viewed, and the status of any children involved. It was argued at the time that the law was specifically designed to protect inheritance law and the rights of the wealthier section of society. It also demonstrates the difference between Ann Parfect and Hovey in terms of illegitimacy. The case provides a useful reminder that the stigma placed on one person might be avoided by another by accident of birth. It is possible that as Ann was born before the Act that it was sociably accepted. Unfortunately, research has failed to produce an exposition on the implementation of Canon LXXVI of 1604 in this period, and the archivists at Lambeth Palace Library were also unable to offer further guidance.

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<sup>45</sup> MALSC P336/1/3.

<sup>46</sup> 26 Geo. II. c. 33 "An Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage", which is also known as Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act.

Of similar interest are the three entries for strangers buried in the parish. Throughout the Shorne records there was a significantly higher number of strangers buried (in comparison with Cuxton). There may be several reasons for this, and it would require a deeper study of the records available. However, we can speculate that the socio-political and economic structure of the parish as well as the geographical location of the parish on the trunk road (as compared with more isolated Cuxton) might be factors in understanding why the number of stranger burials at Shorne was so much higher than at Cuxton. Aside from this, the language used is very interesting, in the case of stranger *c*, she is described as a ‘poor traveling woman’ whereas *d*, is described as an ‘idle travelling boy’.<sup>47</sup>

There are several other entries in the parish records which give an insight into Parfect’s ministry and into the parish. In May 1762 there is an entry which is headed “Directions for the better ordering of the bells so the notice they give for Divine Service, may be well-understood by the inhabitants” which lays out in detail how and in what sequence the bells were to ring before each of the two services and the difference between the summer and winter.<sup>48</sup> Whether this was supposed to be applied to both parishes is unclear as no similar entry can be found in the Cuxton registers, which leaves the unanswered questions about how the parishes were served. There certainly is more detail contained in the Shorne registers, but

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<sup>47</sup> David Hitchcock argues that generally one can separate the terms vagrant and migrant via the terms ‘wandered’ or ‘travelled’, that is to argue that people ‘wandered as vagrants’ or ‘travelled as migrants’, though I would argue that this classification might fail without a deeper understanding of clerical language in the eighteenth century, which is beyond this study. This leaves a question as to what category these people fall into; nevertheless, one classification that is clear is the difference between the expectation for a woman to care for herself and a male to care for himself. See David Hitchcock, *Vagrancy in English culture and society, 1650-1750*. (London: Bloomsbury 2018).

<sup>48</sup> MALSC P336/1/2.



then that might be a case of Parfect spending more time in the parish, as that was where he kept residence during the summer before returning to College Yard, Rochester for the winter. The rectory at Cuxton in those days was at the end of the Glebe land, on Bush Road where the Scout Hut now stands. The rectory was considered inhabitable because of damp and mosquito infestation, and was reputed to be where William Laud caught the ‘*Cuxton agage*’<sup>49</sup> whilst rector at St Michaels and All Angels.

### Introduction to Publishing

This is the limit of what we know about Parfect’s life, although he appears to have been well read, or certainly had access to plenty of books, perhaps in the Rochester Cathedral’s library. We also know from visitation records that Parfect brought Jewell’s *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (1562) and Erasmus’s *Paraphrase of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles* (1517 – 1524). which he gifted to the congregation at Shorne. These were not the only gifts that Parfect made; the same visitation records also show that Parfect gifted a silver salver and a new altar cloth of ‘superfine purple cloth with gold fringe’.

During his life, Parfect wrote and published several pamphlets. These range from eighteen to ninety-eight pages in length and covered several subjects. Notably most of the pamphlets were published in roughly a ten year period, though why he did this again remains inconclusive. Appendix 3 has a table covering all the works and publishers in full and they are discussed in full in Chapter 3 – *Publishing*. However, one thing must be noted here, because it is pertinent to the person of Parfect, is how well read he appears to have been.

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<sup>49</sup> Cuxton agage is believed to be a mosquito born infection like malaria.

In the pamphlet *The Constant Residence of the Clergy Upon Their Livings Shewn to Be Absolutely Necessary for Recovering the Sinking Interests of Religion in General, and of the Church of England in particular...*, Parfect refers to a diverse range of authors, including Erasmus, Burnett, Latimer and Watson; in fact, the total number of works mentioned in the pamphlet is 63, ranging from Chaucer to Parliamentary Acts. All the pamphlets show a similar level of reading and if scrutinised further and compared to other publications of the time might provide a helpful insight into the works that the SPCK was sending out in their book bundles to members.

#### Parfect's Death

Parfect died at his home in Rochester on 21st September 1770. The cause of death is unknown but at 86 years of age, it must be concluded that, with all that he managed to achieve, Parfect had a long and full life. His obituary described him in glowing terms, both in terms of ministry and his church work. After his death and in accordance with the instructions given in his will, Parfect was laid to rest in a vault he designed in the Chancel of St Michael and All Angels at Cuxton. The vault was a large and grandiose affair with an inscription on the ledger and one on the north side that are no longer legible.

According to Smetham “like Shakespeare, our old Vicar bequeaths his execrations upon any person who ‘should disturb his bones.’ Presuming that the virtue of this curse extends to the removal of his tomb, the shade of the late rector (Mr Shaw) must bear this responsibility”.<sup>50</sup> It was the Rev. Shaw who oversaw the restoration of St Michael and All Angels at Cuxton between 1863-1868 and the building of the new south aisle which, ironically, was funded by Lord Darnley. During the restoration Parfect's vault was moved to

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<sup>50</sup> Smetham, *A history of Strood*.

its current position on the south side of the Church in the churchyard close to the south door. After their deaths Bridget, John and Mary were all interred in the tomb as was Hannah who had died in 1763.

I have already touched on the contents of Parfect's will and will refer to it later in the thesis. A shortened transcript of the will, missing the standard parts of will construction, is found in Appendix 4. However, breaking the will down is beyond the scope of this work and requires more research, especially to find the elusive brother William who is mentioned in the will, but cannot currently be placed in the Parfect family tree.

This chapter has described how the son of a weaver from Somerset was ordained and then came to the Diocese of Rochester. Once in the diocese Parfect not only demonstrated a unique gift for ministry to the three parishes of which he held the livings, but also became an influential member of the SPCK. In the SPCK, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, he spearheaded a movement that was going to have national consequences.

Within the parishes Parfect proved himself to be a contentious clergyman, even if questions have presented themselves over his climb through the social hierarchy and his accumulated wealth. How he managed both is subject to some conjecture, but in Chapter 2 we will now explore his first major project: the workhouse at Stroud.

## Chapter 2: Power

*Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.*

*But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matt 19:13-14.*

This chapter will focus on the inception at the workhouse at Stroud. However, because workhouses did not come into being *ex nihilo* we must consider the background of the areas where they were constructed, the organisations involved in their construction and examine the social and economic data that are available. Whilst this thesis concentrates on Parfect, it is necessary to build a historical understanding of Stroud in order to tease out the social conditions that required the construction of a workhouse. These historical and social conditions also help us understand the parish that Parfect ministered to and the background to the people who called upon the workhouse. In order to understand that ministry this chapter will also explore the origins of the SPCK, an organisation that was intrinsically linked to the fledgling workhouse movement and remained so until the formation of the union workhouses in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It is harder to build a comprehensive picture of the economic status of Stroud at the time of Parfect's ministry. I have found that at Cuxton and Shorne the biggest insights have been gained by looking at the parish records, as no other data is available. However, at Strood these parish records are missing from the local archives for the time of Parfect, and according to the Chief archivist they were lost by H. Smetham. However, this appears to be a misunderstanding. Smetham includes a footnote that states "this valuable old book has been

lost... the hope and desire that it may soon find its way back to its home among the archives of Strood parish cannot be too heartily expressed”<sup>1</sup>. Scott-Robertson notes that, when he examined it, the volume was in the possession of the antiquarian Humphrey Wickham to whom the residents of Strood owe a great debt for the preservation of many artefacts. In 1915, when Henry Plomer transcribed the churchwardens’ account of St Nicholas’, Strood 1555-1600 (which were later bound with Part II 1603-1662) he drew the information from BL Add. MS 36937. At the time this manuscript was at the time in the hands of the British Museum Department of Manuscripts, which was probably placed in their hands by Mr Humphrey Wood who was the executor of Wickham’s estate and oversaw the sale of goods by Sotheby’s and those donated to the museum. It remains a possibility that, since many of the artefacts in Wickham’s estate were brought by the British Museum in order to preserve them for the nation, the documents were passed over in order to help their research. However, whilst researching the published works of Parfect, I noticed that many available electronic versions were stamped as property of the British Museum and now appear again to be in the collections at the British Library. I propose, therefore, that the collection of Wickham was a lot larger than he has been given credit for. Further research and understanding of the bequests made to the British Museum from the Wickham estate may open a new understanding Strood and could produce one of the most complete editions of Churchwardens’ Accounts covering a period 1555 to present.

Strood: a history

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Smetham A history of Strood. (Strood: Sweet and Sons, 1899).

The birth of the workhouse movement in Kent at Stroud is a curious moment in history, because it predates the Knatchbull Test Act 1723,<sup>2</sup> and was started by an unknown clergyman who had recently arrived in the area. Stroud seems to have had no bearing upon the national stage and its geographical location on the north Kent coast does little to offer any prospective arguments as to why a workhouse movement should have been inspired from there. With the exceptions of Simon de Montfort, who held the manors of Boncakes and Godlington, launching his fire ships against the bridge at Rochester on Good Friday 1264 from Stroud and Sir Thomas Wyatt's 1554 attempt at halting the marriage of Queen Mary to Prince Phillip of Spain, most of English history seems to have passed this quiet community by.<sup>3</sup>

By the time of the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Stroud was split into three boroughs. Temple Borough is most likely to have been the area around Temple Manor and Temple farm; it seems to have had the highest density of population, and is the area most often mentioned in the removal orders to the workhouse. Little Borough was the area around the London Road which would later become the Turnpike, with the Turnpike Gate being at the junction of Gate Street and London Road on what became known as Angel Corner. The third borough was Duchy Borough, whose location remains unknown; however, I speculate

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<sup>2</sup> 9 Geo. I. Cap. 7 *For Amending the Laws relating to the Settlement, Imployment and Relief of the Poor*.

Commonly known as the Workhouse Test Act or Knatchbull's Act after Sir Edward Knatchbull, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet the Kent MP who sponsored it. In 1702 Knatchbull had been returned as the MP for Rochester.

<sup>3</sup> These two moments in history directly affected Strood and for the purpose of this work are held separately from the events of Rochester and Chatham as well as those of the River Medway which although have a significance to the populous of Stroud, have or seem to have no direct effect on the landscapes or the manors of the town.

that this was the areas controlled by the Duchy of Lancaster (the crown estate areas which were probably connected with the dockyard at Chatham and the defence of the realm). All three boroughs were amalgamated in 1884 into Strood, which was then in 1887 split into Strood intra and Strood extra. Understanding these three boroughs is instrumental in building a picture of the social structure of Strood, because it is these three boroughs that are found in the Hearth Tax returns.<sup>4</sup> The following data from 1663 lists the number of hearths as follows:

BOROUGH	DWELLINGS	HEARTHS
TEMPLE	129	398
LITTLE	50	154
DUCHY	13	46
TOTAL	192	598

By using this data Smetham<sup>5</sup> calculated the population as 969 souls, although it should be noted that actual population figures are likely to be somewhat different from this and not

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<sup>4</sup> Each liable householder was to pay one shilling, twice a year, for each fire, hearth and stove in each dwelling or house. The tax's complex administration meant assessment and collection methods changed radically over time. See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/taxation-before-1689/> for further information and archival data.

<sup>5</sup>Henry Smetham *A history of Strood*. (Strood: Sweet and Sons, 1899). It was reprinted by John Hallowell Publications in 1978 as a limited edition run of 500, is the most important and complete history of Strood available. Smetham duly recognises the work of Cannon William Archibald Scott-Robertson who produced *Strood in the Olden Time. A lecture, etc* based on a lecture given at St Nicholas School, Strood in 1877. Canon Scott-Robertson was at the time secretary of the Kent Archaeological Society, Vicar of Elmley and Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral. The other work of note is Edward Hasted, *The history and topographical survey of the county of Kent*, Volume 3 published in Canterbury in 1797 which contains the

everybody was included in the hearth tax. Although the figures that Melling<sup>6</sup> and Beier<sup>7</sup> use are pre-Parfect, they also represent the only data available so are useful in understanding the social conditions in Stroud.<sup>8</sup>

*Estimated distribution of poor in Stroud and neighbouring parishes.*

	Shorne 1598	Strood 1598	Grain 1598
Estimated Total population	N=354	N=723	N=63
Able to pay poor rates	66.7	69.2	61.9
Unable to pay, but not needing assistance	20.3	29.0	33.3
Poor, but not on relief	5.7		
On relief	7.3	1.8	4.8

In some ways it is important here to refer to the work of Melling. In her excellent resource about Kent, *Kentish Sources IV: The Poor* she publishes transcripts drawn from the Sir John

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information for the Shamwell Hundred and the three parishes most connected with Parfect. Many of the later works concerning the history of the Medway area are reproduction collections of photographs and thus deal with a later period or based extensively on Smetham and Hasted, errors and omissions included.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Melling. *Kentish Sources* 6 Volumes. (Maidstone: KCC 1967) esp. *IV The Poor*.

<sup>7</sup> A.L. Beier Poverty and progress in early modern England in *the first modern society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*. Ed. Beier A.L., Cannadine, D and Rosenheim J. (Cambridge: Past and Present Publication, CUP, 1989). 201-239.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 207. For further poor rate payment information for St Nicholas, Stroud the best source is Plomer. (see later for discussion on this work) MALSC 336/12 series has overseer accounts for Shorne though a number are N.F.R. The details for Grain are a lot more restricted as the overseer accounts MALSC P314 are of a later period.



Leveson.<sup>9</sup> These transcripts allow us to see how precarious life was, and how it depended on the whims of crops and seasons. As Stroud remained predominantly agricultural during Parfect's ministry there is no reason to suspect that the figures do not represent the precarious position in his time. As Dyer explains, "poverty was a permanent condition for some and a periodic problem for many".<sup>10</sup> As a result, there had existed since the medieval period a society where the "poor received little or no help from the upper layers of society. There were so many of them that they had to feed themselves, or, if they needed help, resort to the rest of the pleasantries instead of putting their hopes in institutions known for their shortcomings".<sup>11</sup> It is this shortcoming that I believe Parfect tried to fill by establishing the workhouse.

## Poverty

Later samples taken from the overseers' accounts, showing relief made under the Poor Law from the parish of Shorne whilst Parfect was the incumbent show that falling onto the charity of the parish seems to have been a last resort and done only out of desperation. Many of the entries for relief are followed a few days later by a corresponding entry in the registers for a burial. This demonstrates how late for some relief was in coming. A full and clear example of this can be traced through the Judd family, long-term residents in the parish of Shorne and typical of the agricultural community within the parish.

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<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Melling. *Kentish Sources: Volume IV The Poor*. (Maidstone: KCC 1967) 12ff.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Dyer, *Standards of living in the later Middle Ages*. (Cambridge: CUP 1989) 257.

<sup>11</sup> Maria Moisé, "Debate: Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England." *Past and Present* 154 (1997) 224.

Research I have undertaken in the Shorne parish registers has shown that Thomas Judd was a farmer in Shorne. On his death in 1734 he left in his will:<sup>12</sup>

To son Thomas, 1/-; rest and residue of real and personal estate, to wife Elizabeth and brother William Startupp, equally divided. Brother William and James Hubbard of Cobham, Farmer, are executors. Signs with a mark Witnesses: John Durling, James Dingley and Thomas Harkton ? Proved January 11th 1735. Inventory, Household Goods only, appraised by John Fox, 21st October 1734. Total value £14 16s 9d.

At the time of the death of his father, Thomas was twelve years of age, and one must assume the shilling was for mourning, as was customary. Thomas outlived all but one of his seven sisters, the rest dying in infancy. Thomas went on to marry Mary Overy of Shipbourne on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1765, subsequently the couple had two children together William (b. Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 1755, d. August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1758) and Sarah (b. March 3 1762, d. August 21<sup>st</sup> 1765).<sup>13</sup> It is in 1765 that we find the Judd family in the overseer accounts:

July 2	Pd Docder for Master Judd	0-3-6
July 12	Relieved Dame Judd	0-3-0
July 13	Pd Dame Judd for burying of husband	0-10-0

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/monumental-inscriptions/shorne> (accessed October 13, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Dates for birth and death throughout the paper are given as per the registry entry. Canon law stated that a baptism should be held within two weeks of a birth and funerals very rarely take place more than a few days after death and therefore are traditionally accepted for the period to be accurate, this changes after 1834 when the record keeping process changes.

August 3	Relived Dame Judd	0-2-6
August 17	Relieved Dame Judd	0-2-0
September 6	Relieved Dame Judd	0-1-0

It is noticeable how the poor rates paid to this family reflect the number of people in the household and are not a reflection of the cost of running a house. However, in the case of the Judd family we can see the decline of relief from 0-3-0 to 0-2-6 after the death of her husband and then a further reduction to 0-1-0 after the death of Sarah. So not only has Mary Judd had to cope with the loss of her husband and child within a short period of time, but her income has also been reduced by 66 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the loss of these records we can state with reasonable certainty that the two most important industries for the area were fishing and agriculture. We know from Smetham that “as late as 1673, a saffron garden in Strood was entered in the Strood parish book as worth a rent of £10 per annum”.<sup>15</sup> Smetham also states that in the late seventeenth century there was silk weaving and a ropewalk.<sup>16</sup> Towards the north of Strood, starting roughly with the boundary of Frindsbury parish boundary are large chalk deposits, which like ones to the south of Strood have been considerably mined since the earliest times. The southern deposits provided much of the basis for local employment in cement, paint and

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<sup>14</sup> Time has not been allowed in this research to fully trace this out as a comprehensive argument in terms of equality or the standard practice for the Parishes concerned. But considering the likely implications and understanding gained from a fuller academic study it is recommended as an area of further research that should be completed.

<sup>15</sup> Smetham, *A history of Strood*. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid 17.

bricks up to the late 1980s. In 1709 a dispute broke out between the fishermen of Rochester, Chatham, Strood and Gilling and Lord Herbert who was Lord of the Manor of Milton over the dredging for oysters in the East Grounds. This law suit was finally settled at Westminster and involved 144 fishermen, which demonstrates the importance of fishing to the Medway Estuary. The fishing industry has a long history in the area; in 1446 Henry VI granted a Royal Charter to Rochester giving the exclusive rights on fishing the Medway to the citizens of Rochester. Over the ensuing years there were many disagreements like the one that began in 1709, which was finally settled in 1729 when George II gave the royal assent to an Act of Parliament which granted the rights to the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery (ROFF) a guild still active in Rochester. The guild required people to undertake a seven-year apprenticeship, after which they are summoned to a Mayoral court where they are bestowed the title 'freeman of the river'.<sup>17</sup> As might be expected, most of the trade apart from that linked to agriculture was intrinsically linked with the Medway, either directly by using it for shipping and fishing or indirectly in trades in support of these activities such as brewing, chandlery, and ropemaking. Defoe quoted by Dulley is said to have noted the paucity of gentry in Thames side Kent and gives the reason

that it is marshy and unhealthy, by its situation among the waters: so that it is embarrassed with business, such as shipbuilders, fisher-men, seafaring-men and husband-men, or such as depend on them, and very few families of note are found among them.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Thames Navigation Act. 3 Geo. 2 c11.

<sup>18</sup> AJF Dulley, "People and Homes in the Medway Towns: 1687-1783". *Archaeologia Cantiana* 77 (1962).

Accordingly, it would be possible to argue for the siting of a workhouse in Stroud as an economic necessity, both for the poor and the rich who bore the burden of the tax demands of the parish share. However, that would continue to oversimplify what is a very complex area and would not take into account the socio-political developments that were happening at the time, mainly driven by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, whose origins we will explore next.

### The SPCK

After the restoration, the Church of England became an entity in flux. The stability that was hoped for in the restoration was never found in the fullness in which it was sought and the old order never returned to the dominance it had once hoped to regain. Within years of the restoration, according to J.C.D. Clarke, there were plans made to change the English constitution towards that of France, allowing the great enemy of the established church, Roman Catholicism, to regain a foothold in the nation.<sup>19</sup> Clark argues that while there many who saw the term 'restoration' as equivalent to the term 'revolution' and foresaw a return to the old order, in fact this was not the case. Alongside the battles of the church hierarchy came attacks in other forms. Hobbes and Cudworth led the Platonists, while men like Tindal and Toland led the deists. There was another movement that was high on the agenda of the controlling power that had found its voice in the melee of the commonwealth period.

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<sup>19</sup> JCD Clark, *English society 1660-1832*. (Cambridge: CUP 2000) 52-105

Generally accepted to have been established by George Fox in 1652,<sup>20</sup> the ‘Society of Friends’ (Quakers) began their mission travelling around preaching. These converts generally believed themselves to be the true church of Christ, proclaiming that Christ came to teach people himself and that the episcopal structure of the established church was not in line with the true Gospel. By the time the Seven Bishops signed the letter and triggering the 1688 Revolution and the call for William III of Orange to make good on his already made plans with the anti-popery establishment, these factors had continued to grow and had taken centre stage in the national social and political movements. They continued to have an effect on Parfect’s ministry, especially the publications explored in Chapter 3.

It is then in this scrum of societies and political wrangling that the Reverend Thomas Bray (1656 – 1730) meet with Sir Humphrey Mackworth (1657 – 1727), Colonel Maynard Colchester (1665 – 1715), and John Hooke (1655 – 1712) in what was a group of friends gathering to say goodbye to one of their number and out of which would be formed the SPCK. Bray came from a poor background and funded his way through Oxford as a servitor, graduating BA 1678, MA 1693, and BD followed by DD in 1696. He married in 1685 and his wife died in 1689 leaving two small children. It can be seen from Chapter 1 that in fact Parfect and Bray had a very similar start to their ministries.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Fox’s great revelation was to come to him on Pendle Hill in Lancashire, a place that had been made famous by the Pendle witch trials 1612. Whether the persecution of the Quakers ever connected the two events is not evidentially clear but may be an area of further investigation.

<sup>21</sup> Later Rev. John Parfect was to do the same thing and up to the point of Bray becoming DD their paths are very similar. Parfect only managed to get to MA and therefore in some ways John’s ministry was more illustrious as he became a Fellow of Oriel.

In 1696 Bray started to disseminate his ideas about ministry, publishing *Catechetical Lectures*, a tome of some 300 pages in response to Thomas Tenison calling for the observance of Canon 109 of 1604, which laid out the church's position on how people were to be taught the elements of the faith and learn the 39 Articles which up until late 20<sup>th</sup> century were the agreed terms of membership of the Church of England.<sup>22</sup>

It was the right time for Bray's publication and as such it brought him a certain kind of notoriety and fame, as well as attracting the attention of Henry Compton, the Bishop of London. Unlike many other books of an earlier period Bray's book was not only theoretical but also practical, as in it dealt with not only why the youth and ignorant of the parish should be catechised but how he personally managed to do it. This, I believe, would become important in later debates about the SPCK workhouses and charity schools. At the time of writing there have been no full studies of the founding theology of the SPCK. The two books that are generally accepted to be the history of the SPCK, W.O.B. Allen and Edmund McClure's *The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1698-1898* and W.K. Lowther-Clarke *A History of the S.P.C.K.* are both written from inside the organisation and certainly Allen and McClure's volume reads more like a sales pamphlet than a history. In more recent times Craig Rose and Brent Sirota have done sterling work to try and correct this;

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<sup>22</sup> The 39 Articles can be found in the BCP and are part of the catechism required before confirmation and along with the canons are the rules of conduct of the C of E. The difference with the canons is that the 39 Articles applied equally to the laity as well as those in holy orders.

however, work from Robert Hume has shown that, in Kent certainly, not all SPCK claims seem to be valid, and certainly not in the way that the earlier historical claims suggest.<sup>23</sup>

In 1695, while Bray was in London, he published a text entitled *Proposals for encouraging learning and religion in the plantations*. By 1695 there was a general concern that the colonies were not adhering sufficiently to the teaching of the established church. Indeed, Bray himself wrote

It is nevertheless acknowledged, that there is at this day, but little sense of religion, and a most notorious corruption of manners, in the English colonies settled on the continent of America, and the islands. It is also acknowledged that the gospel hath hitherto made but a very inconsiderable progress among the neighbouring Americans, who still continue in much-what the same ignorance and barbarism, in which we found them above a hundred years ago.

There was a feeling that the church had completely neglected the colonies. “They had very few clergymen, and of those few some were in bad repute”.<sup>24</sup> It is hardly surprising that was the case, as there was not a great incentive for clergy to make the hazardous trip. Sailing times of thirty days for a well rigged ship were not unusual, however, it had to be born in mind that cargo was expensive, and space was limited. Carriage was a valuable commodity and it is unlikely that hard up clergy would have been able to afford passage on the fastest ships. There was also the risk of numerous illnesses, storms and the potential for piracy and

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Hume, “Interest with Impotence: The Influence Of The SPCK As A Directive Force For The Development Of Education In Eighteenth-Century Kent.” *Journal of the history of education society*. 11, no.3 (1982). 165-172.

<sup>24</sup> HP. Thompson, “Dr Thomas Bray” *Theology*. 58, no. 417 (1955) 92-97



that was before even reaching the coast of the colonies, where people landing faced all sorts of issues. Therefore, it seems likely that only those clergy that had failed to get a benefice inside England would have considered the perils of taking a living in the colonies. Bray firmly believed that the poverty of such clergymen would prevent them from reaching a fulfilled ministry, because they would be unable to purchase books for their libraries.

It was a basic call for libraries that was essentially the start of the SPCK, but libraries were not the only mission of the SPCK. Bray had other plans. Early in his ministry Bray had argued that the rising levels of vice and “the sottish, stupid and unconcerned behaviour of the greatest part of people in country congregations; they do not only most shamefully sit down all the time of prayer, but for any appearance of devotion that we can perceive, are as little concerned with the Divine Offices performed, as the stones they tread on, to the exceeding great offence and disturbance of all pious and devout minds”.<sup>25</sup> For Bray, the answer was simple: the congregations of the Church needed rebuilding from the roots up. Bray theorised that if the youth could be given a deep-rooted grounding in the Prayer Book and a deep sense of reverence for the Divine Offices then as they got older this would not leave them. This, he argued, would result in a Church that was more devout and pious, and one that would respect the episcopal structure of the Church of England. This would not only benefit the Church but also the state, a view that would be clearly recognisable in Parfect’s ministry. In order to achieve this the SPCK and many of the people connected with it drew heavily on the work of people like Matthew Hale, the influence of whose *A discourse touching provision for the poor* is clearly seen in the later workhouse rules published on behalf of the SPCK by Parfect. As has been argued for Bray and thus the founding members of the SPCK *the poor* per se were not of concern, other than for the value that could be placed on them in building up a Church

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<sup>25</sup> Thompson, “Dr Thomas Bray” 92.

of England which was under threat from many areas of society and within its own communion. It is clear that the SPCK existed as a political organisation that was more interested in the rebuilding of a dominant state church that had control over the laity and was an instrument of the state, a position that has been demonstrated to have been left weakened after the 1688 Revolution and the subsequent infighting and battles over political supremacy within its own communion. In 1720 this organisation found a voice that was going to change poor relief in Stroud and eventually the country forever.

### Workhouse Inception

It is clear, as Parfect chaired the vestry meeting in 1720 that led to the formation of the Stroud workhouse, that there were several agendas higher on the list than the benefit and welfare of those that the *Proposals* attempt to present as the primary goal. Like Hale, Parfect starts with a claim that the current poverty laws that had existed since 43 Eliz 1 c 2 (dating back to 1601) had undergone a few revisions, but the burden fell too heavily upon the parishes, and the rich were unfairly penalised. He states “’tis humbly hop’d, that in an Attau, which promotes to many Advantages to both *Rich and Poor...*”,<sup>26</sup> which belies his later statements that the *Proposals* will serve the poor by providing a “more regular and comfortable subsistence for the poor.....”.<sup>27</sup> His first concern is the *Rich* of the vestry. The workhouse, which was a plain and unpretentious building, built in the north-east corner of St

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<sup>26</sup> Caleb Parfect, *Proposals made in the year 1720 : To the Parishioners of Stroud, near Rochester in Kent, For Building a work-house there ; With an Account of the good Success thereof: And likewise of Several Work-Houses in Essex, &c. Publish'd to encourage all large and populous Parishes to pursue the same Design ; it being very advantageous to the Rich, as well as the Poor. By the Minister of Stroud.* (London: J Downing 1725) A2. (Referred to hereafter as *Proposals*).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Nicholas' churchyard in a valley with a "hipped roof" and had four dormer windows was not paid for by the parish.<sup>28</sup> In 1735 a workhouse was built in Chatham at a cost of over £3000, a cost which largely carried by the parish. However, the Stroud workhouse was built by transferring the £60 per annum granted to the parish by Watt's Charity, away from the poor it was intended to support to pay the builder the total sum of £360 for the construction of the property.<sup>29</sup> It would be easy to argue that the poor paid for the very house that was going to incarcerate them to benefit of the vestry members. However, there is no actual evidence of the poor being involved at any stage of the decision. I think therefore it is more appropriate to argue that the money that the poor were to benefit from was redirected into a business start-up, controlled by those that did not feel the sting of poverty and potentially put their own interests above those of the people they had oversight over. The original proposal mentions that an eminent lawyer oversaw the details and arranged for the charity to be agreeable to this. It is reasonable to conclude that, as he was the lawyer to Watt's Charity, the eminent lawyer was Mr Walsall, who would later become Parfect's father-in-law.

In the *Proposal* Parfect claims that by setting up a workhouse, the money will be usefully employed than it had been previously. As the provision of the house was only for parish orphans, the impotent poor and the aged, there was a large swathe of society that did not qualify for help; therefore it is safe to judge that it was not a complete relief to the whole community as might be imagined. However, for those included there is a reasonable argument that the subsistence living that quite often involved renting a room in an inn or alehouse was worse than living in the workhouse. Nevertheless, at Maidstone there exists an account from the same period in which it is notable that the workhouse carried an idea of

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<sup>28</sup> Smetham, *A history of Strood*. 299.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 265.

punishment and correction; some people had therefore taken such an aversion to the workhouse “as all the Reason and Argument in the World can never overcome”.<sup>30</sup> Parfect seems have to been positive in his attitude to what the workhouse would achieve, but by then Parfect also had another agenda. Parfect had the idea of publishing the details of the workhouses in a publication commonly referred to as the *Account*, which was to be in the style of earlier publications by the SPCK on charity schools. The *Account* would not only operate as promotion material for the great social experiment of the workhouse but almost be a complete guide to a workhouse from inception to the running of the institution.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the parish of Stroud and Parfect received in return a considerable amount of help from the SPCK in ensuring the success of the new venture. It is for this reason the Stroud workhouse was unique in its inception.

### Workhouse Rules

The proposal as published by Parfect contains a list of twenty rules, which appear to be weighted to the benefit of the officers of the workhouse and the vestry rather than the people who were going to live there. The rules are divided into two parts.<sup>32</sup> The first part deals with the governance of the house and the second part deals with the ‘orders to be observed in the house’. In the first part, one of the most notable rules is IX, which makes provision for all house activity to be made available for those in other places that wish to set

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<sup>30</sup> SPCK. *An Account of Several Work-houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor*. SPCK. 1725 (Referred to from here as the *Account*).

<sup>31</sup> Tim Hitchcock The Parochial Workhouse Movement in *Stilling the grumbling hive: the response to social and economic problems in England, 1689 – 1750*. Ed Davidson L et al. (Stroud: Alan Sutton. 1992).

<sup>32</sup> For a full copy of the rules refer to Appendix 2.

up a similar house. It should also be mentioned that Rule VII allowed for any extra rules as the governors saw occasion to implement. Although the second part is concerned with the rules within the house, these rules are mainly to do with the business dealings of the house. Rule IV laid out the regulations for how the house was going to be serviced by the parish. Rule III stated that all the shops in the parish had to have a turn at serving the house, thereby protecting the business interests of the vestry. The vestry meeting would have been made up of approximately twenty-four members; membership was generally restricted by wealth, local standing or local tradition; therefore it can be argued that the vestrymen acted on their own authority, creating a kind of self-perpetuating plutocracy, replenished as needed from inside their own social group with similar political or business interests. As Parfect argued that the parishioners would not be expected to raise above a £100-0-0 per annum and the poor rate at the time required the raising of £230-0-0, it is clear that the rich of the parish on whom the responsibility of poor relief fell would derive a considerable benefit from the workhouse, once this was coupled with the money being fed back into the local economy for supplies to the house and the profit from the sale of the goods manufactured in the house, it became possible to argue that, as Hale stated, “employment of the Poor is a Charity of very great and importance Consequence to the publique Wealth”<sup>33</sup>

The later second part of the rules deals with the actual inhabitants, but they offer little in the way of protection. In the summer the children were expected to be at work by 6am and continue in their tasks until the anticipated amount of work had been completed, with the administration of fines, starvation or corporal punishment as enforcement to ensure that the tasks were accomplished. There appears to be little contained in the rules to protect the

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<sup>33</sup> Matthew Hale, *A Discourse for touching on the provision of the poor*. (London 1683).

children involved. It is not surprising, then, that in the surviving example of accounts from the pamphlet that Parfect produced, the workhouse's manufacturing output was at a similar level across all inhabitants.

The following is an example of a week's work in the workhouse, reproduced by Parfect in the *Proposal*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Parfect, *Proposal* 1725.

NAMES OF THE CHARITY CHILDREN	WOOL DELIVERED TO THEM	WEEKLY EARNINGS						WASTE IN SPINNING 1 POUND
		AUG 14 MOND	15 TUESD	16 WEDNESD	17 THURSD	18 FRID	19 SAT	
Ann Wall	AUG 12 1L	2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	1d	½ oz
M Dickerson	AUG 12 1L	3d	3d	2d	Absent	3d	1d	No Waste
							1/2	
Eliz Euard	AUG 10 1L	2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	1d	½ oz
Anne Choice	DITTO	1d 1/2	1d 1/2	1d 1/2	1d 1/2	1d	1d	½ oz
						1/2		
J Choice, &c.	DITTO	Learner	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	1d	1/2	1 oz
PARISH ORPHANS								
Thomas Johnson		2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	1d	0
Samuel Holt		2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	1d	0
John Rowe		2d	2d	2d	2d	2d	1d	0
Richard Bromley		2d	2d	Sick	Sick	1d	1d	0

For the same period Perfect gives details of the elderly people:

Betty Long	Made two Shirts this week for the use of the house
M Channon	Made three boys shirts this week
F Ellis	Keeps the children to work, and eases the Master very much in this branch of his business
Ben Cat	Made 8 Dozen of Brooms
J Dudley	Cleans the chambers and makes the beds &c
Th. Browne, &c	Made 2 Pair of Shoes, sol'd 3 pair, heel-peec'd and underlaid 1 pair

For the charity children, the money they made after paying for the wool could be taken home to their families. However, there is no indication of how often wool was delivered to them or the cost of the wool or waste. Further exploration has shown the following note:

“June 22 1723 Receiv'd of Mr \_\_\_\_\_ 12 pound of wool &c. Returned July 1st 111  
12oz --- 117 Skains. Value £0-09-5 ½...Note. Every Skain is so many Threads round  
a Reel of such a Circumference...For which *One Penny* paid for spinning, without  
being at the trouble of Buying or Selling...We pay a *Penny per Oz* for what for what  
is lost, as you see 3 1/2d is deducted for the loss of 3 Oz & half out of the 12 pound.  
The value of 117 Skains at a *penny per Skain*, being 9s 9d”

From this record we can deduce how much was deducted as stoppages for waste, but there is no indication of the cost of the wool to the charity children. Interestingly, it is noticeable that for the orphan children there is no waste. I speculate that this is because the parish bore the cost of the waste for the charity children and, therefore, a tighter control was exercised over



any waste that these children produced. In the above account one of the orphan children is listed as Samuel Holt whose circumstances and reason for being an orphan remain undiscovered, as does what happens to Samuel after these records. Nevertheless, we know that Samuel had at least one sister called Frances, who died in the workhouse in March 1723 after being there for nine months. Searches of the parish registers also record the death of Ann Holt in 1724. Frances is one of four deaths that occurred in the workhouse between June 1722 and August 1723. M Hills d. Nov 1722 and M Burgate d. Dec 1722 are also included in the published accounts that are contained within the proposal for the workhouse. One other person, Widow Beeks d. Feb 13 1722,<sup>1</sup> can be found in the St. Nicholas' parish register. It is here that one of the truly nasty sides of the workhouse comes to light. As Widow Beeks is the only name in the registers, she is the only one buried in consecrated ground. The others were probably buried on the North Side of the graveyard. This part of the graveyard was reserved for three categories of people: those that had committed suicide; those that were not baptised; and convicted felons who had been executed for their crimes. It is possible that these three sad cases were placed here because their baptism could not be established. It is more likely, and altogether more tragic that they were cast out of eternal life and damned to the fires of hell for eternity, for the transgression of being poor. There is plenty of data from all three parishes to show that Parfect was not precise in ascertaining baptism before burial. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Up until 1751 the legal year in England began on 25 March (Lady Day). Thus, although the workhouse didn't open until June 1722, February 1722 falls after the opening of the workhouse. To avoid confusion sometimes the date would be entered as 1722/<sup>3</sup>. I have given dates as entered in the registers or primary sources and have confirmed the accuracy by working back to the previous Lady Day. This also is why Lady Day and Michaelmas are so important in terms of tithe collection and why the contemporary tax year in the United Kingdom starts on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

case of Bolting of Shorne,<sup>2</sup> Parfect was fully aware that one of the children was unbaptised yet still allowed them to be interned in Bolting's vault. I argue that what happened here at Stroud was something more sinister to modern eyes, but would have been perfectly respectful and even expected in a contemporary context. Later championed by Mandeville, paupers were judged only of value for the worth that they could bring to the country's wealth. Therefore, once dead these people were worthless and simply cast out. This remains an area of much needed research, especially in the North Kent area.

Not all was lost for the Holt children though. Meg Holt, who was the oldest was bound until she was twenty-one at the age of sixteen at Christmas 1723, in accordance with the law at the time. The parish received a two Guinea payment and on her twenty-first birthday Meg was to receive 40 shillings and two suits of clothes. This seems to have been the standard arrangements for girls being sent out of the workhouse, though no data has yet been found as to what happened to Meg or the other apprentices, and this remains an area for further study. Parfect claimed that that this was the best arrangement "to *apprentice* such Girls; otherwise they are apt to be often changing Places, and so come but to little".<sup>3</sup> From the *Proposal* it seems the arrangements for girls and the arrangements for boys were different. In the same entry there is Thomas Johnson, aged eleven. He was apprenticed to a fisherman for "three Guineas and cloaths".<sup>4</sup> However, there were no clear stipulations as there were for Meg Holt, and it is not clear whether the clothes were part of the indenture payment or for Thomas at the end of his apprenticeship. This shows that boys were considered a third more valuable than

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<sup>2</sup> Please see the publication on Baptism in chapter 3 for more details.

<sup>3</sup> Parfect, *Proposal* 1725. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 17.

girls, although it is arguable that this was also the bias seen in the wages between men and women as shown in the master's and mistress's salaries at the charity schools.

### The Charity School

A further argument for the selection of Stroud for the proposal of a workhouse, and the setting up of a school might be found by examining how the SPCK communicated. There is evidence that Stroud lay on a transport route used by SPCK officials, and this may explain how the organisation came to be involved in this project in Kent. Although Parfect presented the school as an SPCK scheme, the charity school already existed via the Hayward legacy described in Chapter 1 above. However, the records show that the SPCK helped find the teacher and helped him and his wife travel to Stroud to take up their positions. On 20th March 1719 the secretary of the SPCK, Henry Newman had instructed Mr Good of Ipswich to send his goods to Billingsgate via boat. From Billingsgate Mr and Mrs Wood would travel to Gravesend where they were to spend the night aboard the boat. The following morning Mr Green the Rochester carrier would either take them in his wagon or make provision on the Stroud coach for them.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that this was the same route that Bray had used when he travelled out to the colonies in 1696, when he stopped at Gravesend and set up a library at the cost of £2-6-0, which became the main source of all literature for outgoing vessels. I also believe that this was a regular communication route for the SPCK. The SPCK archive held at Cambridge University Library shows that SPCK members entered into a large quantity of correspondence, and this correspondence needed to be distributed between the society secretary and the corresponding members. It is likely that the SPCK had regular routes with

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<sup>5</sup> The total cost of the trip from Billingsgate is recorded as "passage to Gravesend 12d each, the wagon 12d the coach 1s 6d".

reliable carriers in order to make this possible. All SPCK journeys to Kent had to come through Gravesend for the reasons explained earlier, and as the carrier was known to the secretary, I believe he was part of this network. Arguably, then, the SPCK developed its own web of routes and information highways that allowed it to pass information quickly and in trustworthy hands; this may also have had a financial benefit.

The SPCK expended a considerable amount of time and money helping Parfect get the *Proposal* off the ground. Mrs Good was sent to ‘Artleborough’<sup>6</sup> where she received training in “the appropriate techniques for employing children”.<sup>7</sup> The SPCK also helped with the arrangements for the spinning wheels and books. As with Shrivenham, Parfect would receive packets of books for use within the workhouse, which would have been the ‘*approved books*’ from the three-hundred or so that Bray listed, and the SPCK set the standard on what would have been suitable. In 1723 Parfect was also challenged by another issue that the SPCK saw fit to resolve. In 1723 “many of the inferior inhabitants have resolved...in favour of an unqualified person [for the workhouse master] but a poor native of the town against the opinion of the minister and churchwardens and the leading gentlemen of the town”.<sup>8</sup> What this solution was is not clear, and so far no further data has been found that clarifies the issues. However, what it does serve to illustrate is that, despite Parfect’s self-assured *Proposal*, not all was plain sailing in the setting up of the workhouse.

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<sup>6</sup> Attleborough, Norfolk.

<sup>7</sup> Hitchcock *The Parochial Workhouse Movement* 159.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Having explored the work ethic of the workhouse, it is important to remember that although the workhouse was a business with the benefit of the rich as the ultimate result, there was another pressing issue that can be traced back to the earliest conception of Bray's ministry which the workhouse was required to serve: the strengthening of the Church of England. Bray believed that the Church of England – and, by extension, the state – was under attack from diluted Christian values. These values were diluted by several means. The rise of the non-conformist movements and especially the Quakers were a threat. For Bray and the SPCK, “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”<sup>9</sup> was the answer to a deeper understanding of the Church of England's doctrine and teachings. However, in the public sphere the SPCK appears to have presented its case poorly as the verse is only found once in a SPCK sermon in the first four decades of the eighteenth century. Instead, Parfect takes the route which seems to have been the mantra of later organisations, where you restrict the reading to carefully selected texts that only support your position or the one with which you wish to indoctrinate the young people in your care. For this reason, the rules lay out two texts which on the Sabbath after church all the inhabitants of the workhouse were duly and diligently required to study and absorb, in order for them to be upright and respectable citizens when they left the workhouse. The first is the Bible, and the second is Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man*, first published in 1657.

### The Whole Duty of Man

Close attention to Parfect's *Proposal* reveals his reliance on Allestree's work, and therefore it is important to first describe the basic theological content of Allestree's text, and then provide examples of how it impacted on Parfect's own theological views. *The Whole*

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<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 22:6 (KJV).

*Duty of Man* was probably the most widely known devotional work of the eighteenth century and was translated into other languages. especially Dutch. where it gained a reputation as a Calvinist text.<sup>10</sup> In England, the book took the form of a “manifesto for a renewed society”,<sup>11</sup> and as such was particularly suited for the use of the SPCK, and formed one of the rods by which they sought to straighten society. The book was designed as an outpouring of faithful prayer to be used alongside The Book of Common Prayer (1662)<sup>12</sup>. Designed to be read out loud by the head of the family, it contains a series of instructions on prayer and knowing your place in society. Allestree states that “the benefits purchase for us by Christ are eternal life”;<sup>13</sup> however, humankind compromises this in many ways. The first of these is that eternal life is not open to us until we surrender to the absolute will of God. Therefore, any searching for happiness of the soul can only be achieved by “the hearty, honest endeavour of obeying the whole will of God”.<sup>14</sup> But this will of God has many parts, so therefore it falls upon humankind to be familiar with all these parts. Thus, in the greater reward of being saved from the eternal burning, we must be fully aware of the things that bring everlasting happiness, as neglect in any area will result in eternal misery.

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<sup>10</sup> Jacques B.H. Alblas, “Richard Allestree’s “The whole duty of man” (1658) in Holland: the denominational and generic transformations of an Anglican classic” *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 71, No.1 (1991) 92-104.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Ginn. *Politics of Prayer in Early modern Britian*. (London: Tauris Academic Studies. 2007) 131.

<sup>12</sup> The 1604 revision of the prayer book comes out of the same Hampton Court conference that led to the publication of the King James Version. For a fuller understanding of the BCP see Charles Hefling, *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey* (Oxford: OUP. 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man*. (London: J Leake. 1719) 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid 2.

It is important to notice here that Allestree argues that humankind is naturally aware of their religious duties. Allestree states that “God has stamped upon our souls, that we naturally know them... know them to be our duty... never been told so by the Scripture”.<sup>15</sup> This argument is further strengthened in his reference to the heathen, whom he argues “shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another”.<sup>16</sup> By comparing these two ways of thinking, Allestree argues that a Christian is born with a natural understanding of moral law on their heart. Therefore “God invariably acts in harmony with the general laws of the universe he has created”.<sup>17</sup> In other words. God acts through humankind because God acts through the laws of nature and all created beings, of which humankind is just one part.

However, this law of nature for Allestree is secondary to the law of Christ, which brought a greater light into the world. Christ is the greater light and nature is the lesser light, but the lesser light is “set up in our souls”.<sup>18</sup> It is this lesser light which forms the conscience, which forms our natural, God-given innate ability to form and make moral judgements which prevent us from sin.

This ability to prevent us from sin is naturally created in man, rests within the heart and is therefore a natural part of the human and cannot be separated from our earthly existence. Consequently, only those judgements which are based wholly upon this natural law are just Christian values. This inner built ability is what separates the Christian from the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid 2. (cf Romans 2:15 KJV).

<sup>17</sup> David Nicholls *God and Government: In an “Age of Reason”* (London: Routledge. 1995) 30

<sup>18</sup> Allestree *The whole duty of man*. 2.

heathen or even those “...that pretending to higher Degrees of light and Holiness, than their brethren do, yet practice contra to all the rules of Common honesty”.<sup>19</sup> This further strengthens Allestree’s argument that true Christian understanding must come from within. External badges and symbols, or outward acts of charity do not make a Christian person. What makes somebody Christian is the inner light which shines through the greater light, a realisation of a completely moral understanding of the natural law, even if this is detrimental to your own good, a form of absolute penitential Christianity that later Hume would challenge. For Allestree, honesty to God is the only true honesty; everything else is a compromise and therefore incompatible with the natural law placed in the heart by God at the moment of creation.

Having accepted the fact that God has put this light into our souls, Allestree continues to argue that it is not fit to rest at this point “but proceed to the knowledge of those other things which God has by other means revealed”.<sup>20</sup> This statement returns to the rules that Parfect set for the workhouse at Strood, particularly Rule XV “that neither Children or others, go abroad on Sundays, but continue together in the house, and read some portion of Holy Scripture or a chapter out of the Whole Duty of Man”.<sup>21</sup> In doing this, one can argue that Parfect orders they spend their time on the Sabbath fulfilling their bodies’ requirement of Scriptural knowledge. The alternative to Allestree is only to return to Holy Scripture itself; however, even in the early stages of ‘The Whole Duty of Man’ one can conclude that Parfect and the SPCK had a vision of the place of humankind in the divine order, and nobody in the workhouse was going to be able to forget that. In fact, the very survival of the workhouse

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid 2

<sup>20</sup> Ibid 3

<sup>21</sup> Parfect *Proposal* 14



depended upon the inhabitants being grateful for their lot, accepting that it could not be changed, and submitting to the will of their superiors, whether this was inside the confinements of the workhouse walls, in public or later as servants or apprentices.

## Conclusion.

This chapter has described Parfect's involvement with the SPCK and the development of the workhouse movement. As discussed, the reasons for constructing the workhouse at Stroud are not abundantly clear. There is an argument that it was constructed for social and economic reasons, but conversely there are factors which suggest that it was convenient for the SPCK to choose this location. The transport route, connections to the area of Knatchbull or even the Diocese of Rochester itself may all have been contributing factors.

What is clear is that life was extremely precarious and there was either little support or mistrust in the support that was available. So, when the workhouse arrived, it was able to utilise that uncertainty to the SPCK and vestry's advantage. The workhouse sought not only to reduce people's share in the poor rate, but also to instigate a reformation of Christian understanding throughout society from children up. In order to gain an even deeper understanding of Parfect, I shall now turn to his period of publishing.

### Chapter 3 – Publishing

*When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.  
God is more there than thou; for thou art there  
Only by his permission. Then beware,  
And make thyself all reverence and fear.  
Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stockings; quit thy state;  
All equal are within the churches' gate. Herbert*

In a period of roughly ten years between 1749 and 1760, Parfect published a series of works. This chapter will explore those works and analyse Parfect's theology. Despite carrying out extensive research in several archives and the British Library, so far I have not been able to identify a source of Theology directly connected with Parfect. For that reason, this chapter will briefly explore his publications on a factual level and offer some initial thoughts on the debates and contemporary secondary literature that is available on the subject, in order to construct an understanding of the Theology that lay behind Parfect's work. However it is also recognised that this is a preliminary incursion into Parfect's work and extensive research, possibly at doctrinal level, will develop a fully voice for Parfect and to those he refers to.

By the mid eighteenth century, "theology increasingly came to mean more than just the Bible, as clergy distributed tracts, books and pamphlets to the populace".<sup>1</sup> There are no references in secondary literature to any of Parfect's publications,<sup>2</sup> except for the *Proposals*

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Gregory, "The Eighteenth Century Reformation." in *The Church of England c. 1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*. ed. John Walsh et al (Cambridge: CUP 2007) 79

<sup>2</sup> Whether Parfect's works are tracts, pamphlets or books is difficult to distinguish without original evidence. Levy and Mole define a "Pamphlet: A short complete work, usually polemical in nature, printed

dealt with in Chapter Two above. I have been unable to find any reference to them in other works of the period, or evidence for why they were published. Which leads to the first major question: why did Parfect produce these works, of which some were published at his own expense?<sup>3</sup> In the case of his work on Alehouses and Baptism, there are contemporary references in the parish registers at both Cuxton and Shorne that make it possible to argue that Parfect may have been answering practical, pastoral and theological questions raised by his parishioners through the medium of print, in the same way that a modern incumbent might use a blog. However, it might be that he was involved in a wider debate with the clerical community, for instance Bisse's *Decency and order in publick worship* (1723), and the Foundling Hospital's *An humble ... address to the ... President ... Governors ... and Guardians of the Foundling Hospital. [On infant-baptism.]* (1749) are examples that such a debate existed and are closely connected to some of the subjects Parfect was writing on.

Bowing the knee at the name of Jesus

In 1749 Parfect's first publication *A Letter from a Gentleman to the Minister of his Parish, occasioned by this minister's never bowing at the name of Jesus in the publick service*

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unbound, and making use of either staples or sewn pages instead, occasionally utilizing paper wrappers, and designed for wide circulation" and I have settled on that description for this thesis, without inferred meaning. For a better understanding see Michelle Levy and Tom Mole *The Broadview Introduction to Book History*. (Ontario: Broadview Publishing Ltd.) 196

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 3 contains an overview of all Parfect's publications and cross references to availability in the British Library. Many have been digitalised by Google Books, however in these copies the annotations are not overly clear and therefore it is recommended that people refer to the originals.

*of the Church*, was printed for Sam Baker in London.<sup>4</sup> Baker was interesting in his own right, a popular bookseller in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the founder of Sotheby's auction house, and had a reputation as a supplier of high-quality books to clergymen of the time.<sup>5</sup> The publication is 18 pages in length and is a letter to Parfect, raising objections to the fact that Parfect never bows his knee at the name of Jesus. The writer is quite at pains to expand upon Canon XVIII of 1604 and the legality of the canons and ecclesiastical law but offers little in defence of their argument. The central point that the writer makes is that Canon XVIII<sup>6</sup> requires due

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<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this chapter the *Proposal on the workhouse at Stroud* will not be covered as I have already examine it in Chapter 2, and its content varies somewhat from the latter publications, as it is only concerned with putting forward an idea on behalf of the SPCK, whereas the latter publications are PPT in nature.

<sup>5</sup> Christian House, "Sotheby's Original Innovator: the Life of Founder Sam Baker" Sotheby's At 275. March 8, 2019. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/sothebys-at-275-from-bookseller-to-sothebys-founder-the-life-of-sam-baker>.

<sup>6</sup> XVIII Reverence and Attention to be used within the Church in Time of Divine Service. In the time of Divine Service, and of every part thereof, all due Reverence is to be used; for it is according to the Apostles Rule, Let all things be done decently, and according to order: Answerable to which Decency and Order, we judge these our Directions following: No Man shall cover his Head in the Church or Chapel in the time of Divine Service, except he have some Infirmary; in which case, let him wear a Night-cap or Coif. All manner of Persons then present, shall reverently kneel upon their Knees when the General Confession, Litany, and other Prayers are read; and shall stand up at the saying of the Belief, according to the Rules in that behalf prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer: And likewise when in time of Divine Service the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly Reverence shall be done by all Persons present, as it hath been accustomed; testifying by these outward Ceremonies and Gestures, their inward Humility, Christian Resolution, and due Acknowledgment that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the World, in whom alone all the Mercies, Graces, and Promises of God to Mankind, for this Life and the Life to come, are fully and wholly comprised. None, either Man, Woman or Child, of what Calling soever, shall be otherwise at such times busied in the Church, than in quiet Attendance to hear, mark, and understand that which is read, preached, or ministered; saying in their due places audibly with the Minister, the Confession, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; and

reverence and a legal requirement of bowing the knee. Parfect has annotated the front page with a response from Bp Burnet arguing that “Bowing at the knee of Jesus was not thought a fit Expression of their grateful Acknowledging of our saviour & an envking (sic) of His Divinity.”<sup>7</sup> The arguments over whether the knee should be bowed, and the implementation of the canon have swung in various directions. The Elizabethan injunctions of 1559 enforce the bowing of the knee, although no penalty appears to have been attached to those that refrained until “Bishop Laud was at the Head of the Church, who pressed it equally with the rest, and caused above twenty Ministers to be fined, censured, and put by their Livings, *for not bowing at the Name of Jesus, or for preaching against it*”.<sup>8</sup> Bisse, who was Laudian in tendency, takes the same view and argues that those that do not bow the knee only refrain because they enter into a worship and “offer unto the Lord only that, which costs them nothing...”<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Parfect seems to have rejected the practice both in his use of the Burnet note and in the experience of those in his parish at Shorne.

#### Dr Ibbotson’s case

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making such other Answers to the publick Prayers as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer: Neither shall they disturb the Service or Sermon by walking, or talking, or any other way, nor depart out of the Church during the time of Service or Sermon, without some urgent or reasonable Cause.

<sup>7</sup> Caleb Parfect, *A Letter from a Gentleman to the Minister of his Parish, occasioned by this minister's never bowing at the name of Jesus in the publick service of the Church*. (London: Sam Baker, 1749), ii. The underlining is Parfect’s own and transcribed here for clarity.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Neal, MA. *The history of the Puritans or Protestant Non-Conformists from the Death of Queen Elizabeth to the beginning of the Civil War in the year 1642*. Volume II. (London: Richard Hett. 1733) 255

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Bisse, *Decency and Order in Publick Worship Recommended in Three Discourses, Preached in the Cathedral Church of Hereford. By Thomas Bisse, D. D. Chancellor of the said Church*. (London: W. and J. Innys. 1723) 60

Parfect's next publication, in 1750, was twenty-four pages long, and entitled *Dr Ibbotson's Case shewn to be no sufficient precedent for assessing Parsons, Vicars &c. to Poor-Rates for Tithes they don't occupy, commonly called compositions. In a letter ... To which is annexed, another letter, shewing that a proportion of such compositions may be claimed to the day of the death of the incumbents, etc.*" Dr Ibbotson's case was, one can imagine, a case that was close to all incumbents' hearts and involved the very thing which Parfect was most fastidious about, the questions of tithes and tithing.

As with most of the Parfect publications it has not been possible to discover the identity of the correspondent or why Parfect felt it necessary to publish the letter. For both Cuxton and Shorne the tithe books are clearly the most important books in the parish aside from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Both tithe books held at MALSC<sup>10</sup> contain large amounts of annotations and important documents concerning the parish. The central themes of the letter concern the taking of tithes as modus, whether clergy should contribute to the poor rate and what should happen on the death of an incumbent as regards outstanding tithes or modus. This letter was clearly central to Parfect's life, with thirty-four acres of shares in Cuxton and over forty acres of shares in Shorne, Parfect was, like most clergy of the day, a gentleman farmer who relied on the shares to keep poverty at bay and to make sure that his family were kept in the style expected. Jacob argues that the expected income from tithes was over half of what an incumbent expected to receive and the glebe made up a considerable

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<sup>10</sup> Tithe account book of the Rev. Caleb Parfect, Vicar of Shorne, 1733-1770 MALSC P336/27/5 and Precedent and memory book MALSC P108/3/1 which Parfect refers to as the *Great Tithe Book* and covers Cuxton.

amount of the rest.<sup>11</sup> As most clergy lived on the poverty line it is easy to understand why, for Parfect, the question of tithing was so central to his life. In both tithe books he takes great pains to lay out as clearly as an accountant the name and amount of each share he receives along with notes. Indeed, tithes were so important to the financial stability of the clergy that Parfect in 1741 sued Lord Darnley of Cobham Hall for one hundred and fifty shares. This was a serious undertaking for a clergyman of Parfect's position. Evans states that the Rector of Haughton, Staffordshire had been unable to keep his litigation going at a similar period, because the financial resources of the defendants far outstripped his own; and having finally run out of resources, he had to give the case up.<sup>12</sup> With litigation running the risk of costs that could amount to thousands of pounds and the status of Lord Darnley this cannot have been an easy decision for Parfect to make.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, in the tithe books there is a considerable amount of correspondence between Parfect and Lord Darnley and his agent who managed the Cobham Hall estate. However, this correspondence brought no satisfaction to either party and in the end the case was heard at the Court of Chancery.<sup>14</sup>

#### Baptism in Private by the Public form

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<sup>11</sup> WM Jacob. *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century: 1680-1840*. (Oxford: OUP. 2007) 126ff

<sup>12</sup> Eric J Evans, *The Contentious Tithe: The Tithe Problem and English Agriculture 1750-1850*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1976) 3

<sup>13</sup> Ibid 42-66 In this chapter Evans provides the most useful oversight of litigation in this period and for the student interested in the problem of litigation and tithe provides the most complete demonstration and referencing on the subject found to date.

<sup>14</sup> TNA, Kew. C 12/2226/33 Parfect v El. of Darnley b.b.r.r.

Parfect seem to have had a penchant for making sure that things were done strictly to the letter of the law, and in his next publication he demonstrated his belief in the unwavering authority of the Prayer Book. In 1754 Parfect published *A Letter from a Clergyman, giving his reasons for refusing to administer baptism in private, by the public form; as desired by a gentleman of his parish*. This publication is sixty-two pages long and is connected to a recorded case in the Shorne parish registers; it also brings Parfect back to his SPCK roots. As the Prayer Book and Parfect's ministry are inseparable, and Parfect refers to the authority of the Prayer Book constantly throughout the letter, it is important to understand the Prayer Book position on baptism before turning to Parfect's writing. The Prayer Book occasional office of Baptism of Infants is central to understanding this letter. In the rubrics for the office, there is provision for the parents to address the Bishop on the grounds of delay. This provision was added by Crammer, because of the expectation that the parents would be catechised by the incumbent before the infant was baptised and the fear that some incumbents would overdo this process. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, one of the SPCK's fundamental goals was the growth of the Christian nation, through mission and the catechism. As such, the baptism office not only acts as a way of welcoming the infant into the community of faith but also a way of making sure that the parents were fully aware of their Christian duty towards not only the infant but the community as well. It was only through the clergy of individual parishes and the pastoral directives that they imposed that this mission to catechise parents and baptise infants could gain momentum.<sup>15</sup> Contained in the Shorne parish register the entry for John Bolting<sup>16</sup> demonstrates the difficulty that Parfect was having in enforcing the rubrics in his parish. George Bolting had two illegitimate children with Ann Hooey, neither of which had been baptised, despite Parfect's best efforts. On visiting the house Parfect finds that the

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<sup>15</sup> Gregory, *The Eighteenth Century Reformation*. 70

<sup>16</sup> MALSC P336/1/2(2) 6



youngest, Catherine, had already died, and the other child who was over four years of age lay dying, so Parfect administered baptism in private for the sake of the child. Parfect notes “all means tried by the vicar [???]<sup>17</sup> to get it done being to no manner of purpose”<sup>18</sup> and in the letter we read that Bolting had tried unsuccessfully to get another local vicar to administer the office in Parfect’s place. Parfect’s insistence is perfectly demonstrated in the rubrics in the Prayer Book. The provision for baptism in private is made so that a child in mortal danger can and should be baptised, thus “it is certain by Gods word, that children which are baptised , dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved”. Therefore, the provision of baptism in private is not an optional office that can be invoked at the parents’ wishes but a necessary requirement for salvation on the occasion when required and could be performed without the need for Clergy. However, it is possible to read in Parfect’s letter, which is most certainly addressed primarily to the Bolting family, that for some like the Boltings they did not feel this was the case. It may be worth noting that many people did not know that baptism could be administered in extremis by someone other than an ordained minister.

Parfect opens the letter by placing considerable weight upon the rubric “The Minister of every parish shall warn the people that without great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses”.<sup>19</sup> The theological reasoning behind this for the church was that when an infant is baptised they are welcomed into the whole body of Christ and the community plays a role in this. For Parfect and the Book of Common Prayer, the baptism service was not just about the infant joining the community but also served to

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<sup>17</sup> The original word is unclear and so transcribed as [???] for purposes of accuracy

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. The word marked [???] is not clear and therefore I was unable to transcribe and is missed out as the sentiment is clear from the available text.

<sup>19</sup> Book of Common Prayer 1662

remind that “every Man<sup>20</sup> present may be put in Remembrance of his own Profession made to God in his baptism”.<sup>21</sup> It would therefore be completely inappropriate to use the publick office in private. As Parfect argued, to try and change the publick office into a form that was suitable for a private baptism would result in “great violence being done to it”.<sup>22</sup> This is because the office happens around a font which is found in the church, not in a parlour or bed-chamber, and involves the whole community of the church. Yet there was a greater and more pressing reason, the integrity of the office of the Church and Parfect’s own ability to continue with his ministry. The Canons of 1604 imposed a responsibility on the ministers of the church to maintain due order and diligence and as such contains several canons which specifically forbade the Clergy from using offices for a purpose for which they were never designed and intended to be used.

Parfect argued, using evidence from Mr Archdeacon Sharpe, that the use of the private baptism had grown from the privilege of Kings, and was later taken up by nobles, then gentry and so on by *imitatio regis*, and through this it became fashionable to exercise baptism at home. However, Parfect states that “although some *Irregularities* had been occasionally committed, yet they were *always condemned*, as *Innovations upon Church-Discipline*, and *unwarrantable...*”.<sup>23</sup> During the period of the Commonwealth there “was a move away from

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<sup>20</sup> The term *Man* is used in the sense of the KJV and Book of Common Prayer to indicate all of mankind regardless of birth sex or assigned gender and does not indicate a patriarchal representation of baptism.

<sup>21</sup> Caleb Parfect, *A Letter from a Clergyman, Giving His Reasons For Refusing to Administer Baptism In Private, By The Public Form; As Desired By a Gentleman Of His Parish*. (London: R Griffiths. 1754) 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid 5

<sup>23</sup> Ibid 32

the performance of baptism *in facie ecclesiae*".<sup>24</sup> After the Commonwealth, when the Prayer Book was revised in 1662, it might have been expected that the provision for baptism would be returned to the earlier guidance. However, the rubric "The Curates of every parish shall often admonish the People, that they defer not the Baptism of their Children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their Birth, or other Holy-day falling between, unless a great and reasonable cause, to be approved by the Curate".<sup>25</sup> This rubric appears in the late eighteenth century to have caused a rise in the number of private baptisms in houses and away from the established church.<sup>26</sup> However, in the middle of the century there appears to have been a move by the established church to counteract this tendency and install some form of conformity. It is possible that Parfect's letter is part of this move or a reaction against nonconformist baptism. It is likely that Parfect was reacting against nonconformist practices in the Diocese of Rochester, and to a rise in private baptisms dating from the middle of the century. The Church of England had a tradition of insisting on public baptism, and this had become a hallmark of Anglican identity during the Civil War, in contrast to Puritans.

#### The Number of Alehouses shown to be Pernicious

*The number of alehouses shewn to be extremely pernicious to the publick. In a letter to a Member of Parliament. By the V. of S. in Kent.* was published in 1758 and is thirty-six pages in length. It was the first of Parfect's pamphlets that was published for the author, and

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<sup>24</sup> P.M. Kitson, "Religious Change and the Timing of Baptism in England, 1538-1750" *Historical Journal* 52, no.4 (Jun 2009): 269-294

<sup>25</sup> Book of Common Prayer 1662 "The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children to Be Used In Houses." Rubrics.

<sup>26</sup> P.M. Kitson, "Religious Change and The Timing of Baptism in England, 1538-1750" *Historical Journal* 52, no.4 (Jun 2009) 275

although it marks a change in Parfect's publishing career, its origins can be traced back to the start of Parfect's ministry. It is evident that Parfect had a grievance against alehouses all his ministry, probably driven by the SPCK's original mission of producing a clean and sober nation, which distained vice and was good for the whole community. In the proposals of 1720 Parfect had already singled out alehouses as a cause of concern. Parfect's concern was with the poor being sent to the ale-houses as had been the custom in Stroud under the old poor law, and then in these alehouses "large Reckonings were presently run up, and such extravagant things done, that many have pretended themselves sick for the sake of being sent to such Quarters".<sup>27</sup> By 1758 Parfect addressed the issues in more scathing terms "Alehouses cannot but be an offence against the Publick, as being commonly *Nurseries* of all Sorts of Wickedness and Mischeif."<sup>28</sup> Indeed, he saw them as such a nuisance that he stated they were "Receptables of Sots, and the Scum of the earth, who delight in decoying their Neighbours".<sup>29</sup>

Examination of the parish tithe books have revealed who some of these people might have been. In 1741 Parfect wrote to a Mr William Waller Esq. who was the Justice of the Peace in Chatham to complain about the man that had owned the 'The Old Billet', a Mr Little. Little, who was a bricklayer, also held the licence for what had been the Old Bakehouse which was the village alehouse in Shorne. At some point the building had been demolished and rebuilt and reopened as The Old Billet and thus, Little needed the premises relicensing in

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<sup>27</sup> Caleb Parfect, *Proposals made in the year 1720 ... to the Parishioners of Stroud, near Rochester, ... for building a Work-House there; with an account of the good success thereof; and likewise of several work-houses in Essex, etc.* (London: J Downing. 1725) 9

<sup>28</sup> Caleb Parfect, *The number of alehouses shewn to be extremely pernicious to the publick. In a letter to a Member of Parliament. By the V. of S. in Kent.* (London: Printed for the author. 1758) 5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 10f

order to sell liquor and ale. However, some years before, according to Parfect, Little had bought another man's wife, called Benning. They then had lived together, passing themselves off as man and wife for some years. In his letter to Waller, Parfect is quite scathing of the couple and describes them as "Little and his Bargin (sic)".<sup>30</sup> Yet, despite his scathing attack, there is a element of doubt and reservation. Along the edge of the copy of the letter in the tithe book there is a annotation which Parfect seems to have added at the time of transcribing which reads "be so good, as to conceal my name. Such people having it in their power to make such reprisals, as there is no guarding against".<sup>31</sup> It is not clear if Parfect was actually afraid of Little and Benning, or whether the proximity The Old Billet to the vicarage and to the church meant that discretion was the better part of valour. For Parfect the central concern raised both in the letter, and in both cases from the tithe books, is the inefficacy of the various acts introduced under George II<sup>32</sup> to deal with what he perceived as the continuing destruction of the community by alehouses and the vice that ensues. In 1767 he writes again to the Justice of the Peace of Chatham, raising concern over a William Samson and the alehouse that he runs, but especially the alley adjacent to the alehouse where skittles, ninepins (which are prohibited under the gambling legislation) and four corner pins are played, which Parfect complained resulted in swearing, cursing drunkenness, idleness and a rise in vice. It is clear here that Parfect, even after fifty years in ministry, is still seeking those original values of the SPCK instilled early in his career.

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<sup>30</sup> MALSC, P336/27/5

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> 2 Geo. II. C28. 26 Geo. II Cap 3130 Geo. II. Are all cited in either the letter or the copies from the tithe books.

Here Parfect was not entering a theological debate or defending the Canons or Book of Common Prayer but speaking out about what he saw as an issue for the communities that he served. In Shorne it was Little's disregard for the natural God-given state of marriage, whereas in Cuxton it was Samson's disregard for respectability. Yet while holding both of these individuals accountable for their actions, in the published letter Parfect clearly laid the blame on the state for not acting in the interest of the nation and introducing and enforcing stronger legislation in order to deal with the rise of alehouses, since he was convinced that "*so excessive a Number of Licences, is to advance the Revenues of the Crown*".<sup>33</sup> At this point Parfect argued that although alehouses might raise the revenues of the crown, it was the community that paid the ultimate cost:

FREQUENT Occasions present themselves to, and (as it were) oblige the Legislature (amidst their other great national Concerns) to turn their Thoughts towards the alarming, yet increasing Charge of maintaining the Poor of the Kingdom, and to enquire into the Sources of it. And whenever this is done, it cannot but instantly appear, how much Alehouses contribute to this heavy, almost insupportable Burden ; and how many Families are impoverished by them. Most Parishes will furnish any good Man, disposed to satisfy himself, with Instances enough of this Nature, as also of the Ruin of young Men of industrious, creditable Families—of Servants, Journey men, and the like, by having so many Opportunities and Temptations every where around them.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Caleb Parfect, *The Number of Alehouses Shewn to Be Extremely Pernicious to The Publick. In A Letter to A Member of Parliament.* By the V. Of S. In Kent. (London: Printed for the author. 1758) 9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid 14f

It is this temptation and the move away from the new creation that was a central tenet of Parfect's ministry. It is perhaps hard for us to understand in contemporary society how Parfect's objection to alehouses was anything other than a puritanical fiscal exercise, but I am not convinced. I think what Parfect was genuinely concerned about was the breakdown of the family unit and the cost to society, and how these affect all strata of the community from the poor to the rich, which I believe is why he published his next work.

Laws Divine and human, for the observation of the Lord's Day.

In 1759 Parfect published his most developed work of Theology, *Laws Divine and Human, for the observation of the Lord's Day ... By the V- of S- [Vicar of Shorne, i.e. Caleb Parfect], in Kent*. This twenty-page publication printed for the author is a marked turned from the other works and perhaps marks the pinnacle of Parfect's publications, aside from the work he did with the SPCK on workhouses. The publication opens with an exposition on the Sabbath, drawn straight from the book of Genesis, "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made".<sup>35</sup> This, Parfect argues, grants a sacred for all men to be free of bodily labour on the Sabbath, to exercise piety, the express service of God and to give thanks for His blessings.<sup>36</sup> To strengthen this exposition, Parfect expands his Theological understanding of the Sabbath. His first argument is that God and only God can sanctify the Sabbath. In doing this Parfect also solidifies the creedal understanding of the Christian faith as found in the penitential introduction to the Holy Communion service contained in the Book of Common Prayer. As

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<sup>35</sup> Gen II 3 (KJV)

<sup>36</sup> Caleb Parfect, *Laws Divine and Human, for the observation of the Lord's Day ... By the V- of S- [Vicar of Shorne, i.e. Caleb Parfect], in Kent*. (London: Printed for the Author; sold by R. Baldwin, 1759) 1f

God created the whole earth in six days and rested on the seventh He ordered his people to maintain “Observation of the Sabbath-Day, for a Sign and Cognizance, that He should be their God and no other”.<sup>37</sup> Again Parfect demonstrates, as he did with all his writings, the centrality of the Book of Common Prayer to the rhythm of life and the understanding of the Christian faith from a Church of England perspective, which for Parfect was the one and only true Church which Parfect sees, not only in terms of the community but also in terms of the state.

Having demonstrated the sanctity of the Sabbath, attention is then drawn to the fact that, since God existed before creation, the Sabbath must have existed before creation, which I would argue would be consistent with Parfect’s understanding of the Divine order and God’s plan for the world. For Parfect, anybody arguing against this would be arguing that God had no plan for creation, and evidence found throughout Parfect’s writing indicates this would be Theologically incompatible with his view. As long as there was true religion then the Sabbath was always venerated and observed, however, “as Men liv’d farther off from Creation, and Wickedness prevail’d over the Face of the Earth, and the true Worship of God was corrupted by almost an universal Idolatry, so was the Solemn Day of his Worship neglected likewise”.<sup>38</sup> Parfect thereby turned the argument around from being about scriptural matters concerning the Sabbath, returning to his roots in Bray and the SPCK: it is idolatry of the world that has corrupted mankind, and catechised religion and true observance of the Sabbath can reverse this decline. For Parfect the Sabbath is the Lord’s Day, because it represents the day Jesus rose from the dead, and therefore it is on the morning of this day that Satan is vanquished, and that the whole human race is relieved from the oppression of the spiritual Pharaoh and

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid 2

<sup>38</sup> Ibid 2



Thralldom, “begetting [mankind], instead of an earthly Canaan, to *an Inheritance incorruptible in the Heavens*”.<sup>39</sup> From reading the publication closely one can argue that Parfect’s admonition is not directed so much at his congregation, although that must have been a factor, but more at the state.

In pages four to seven Parfect spends a considerable amount of time debating the effects of bondage, slavery and servitude and how the Lord’s Day is part of the Heavenly Inheritance for “which the Redeemed by *Christ* do look for”.<sup>40</sup> However, for Parfect this redemption was not to be sought in the privacy of one’s own home, but was to be a public observance involving the whole community based on the Jewish public worship of *Passover*, and quoting from the Council of Gangra c.340<sup>41</sup> Parfect states “*If any one shall teach that the House of God is to be despised, and the Assemblies that are held in it let him be accursed...If any one shall take upon him out of the Church, privately to preach at Home, making light of the Church, shall do those Things that belong only to the Church, without the Presence of the Priest; and the Leave and Allowance of the Bishop, let him be accursed*”.<sup>42</sup>, by using this

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid 5

<sup>40</sup> Ibid 6

<sup>41</sup> This date is cited because it is the one Parfect, uses and therefore represents his understanding. The dating of the Council of Gangra is a matter of some debate, for a full understanding of the issues around the debate see: T. D. Barnes, “The Date Of The Council Of Gangra”, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, Vol. 40, No. 1 (April 1989): 121-124. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org>

<sup>42</sup> Caleb Parfect, *Laws Divine and Human, for the observation of the Lord's Day ...* By the V- of S- [Vicar of Shorne, i.e. Caleb Parfect], in Kent. (London: Printed for the Author; sold by R. Baldwin, 1759) 9. According to Barnes **cited above** “the letter and canons of the Council of Gangra survive in full in several Latin versions and Georgian as well as in Greek, while the canons alone survive also in Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Old Church Slavonic”. This possibly explains the differences between Parfect’s translation and

quotation Parfect also theologically attacks non-conformism, which was on the rise in this period. In order to drive this point home, Parfect then turns to legal statute, 1 Eliz. Cap. ii; 23 Eliz. Cap. i. Sect. v.; 1 Jac. Cap. xxii, 29 Car. II. c. vii; representing the various attempts in the 16/17<sup>th</sup> century to enforce church attendance on the Sabbath. Yet he still feels, in his conclusion, that this is not enough to convince people of his position but instead concludes “*they will not bear Instruction, and be wise---They will only be wise in their own Conceits*”.<sup>43</sup>

#### Constant residence of the Clergy

Having completed his short but most Theologically developed work on the observance of the Lord’s Day, in 1760 Parfect turned his hand to the longest and last pamphlet of his publishing career. At ninety-eight pages long, it is thirty pages longer than the Baptism publication and three times longer than the average of his published works so far. However, it is also possible to see it as a culmination of all his other works. Published in 1760, *The Constant Residence of the Clergy upon their Livings shewn to be absolutely necessary for recovering the sinking interests of religion in general, and of the Church of England in particular, etc.* touches on many of the subjects of his early publications but at the same time is different. In 1757 Parfect wrote to the Dean and Chapter of Rochester to “pray the liberty of resigning the Vicarage at Shorne to my son”.<sup>44</sup> Careful inspection shows that about this time Parfect’s hand changes, the penmanship is not the same as it was in earlier correspondence, and the change of hand perhaps indicates a period of illness. This hypothesis

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some other sources. The Parfect translation is cited here in order to emphasise what I believe his true meaning to be.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid 19

<sup>44</sup> MALSC P336/27/5. *Tithe Account Book of The Rev. Caleb Parfect, Vicar of Shorne, 1733-1770.*

is strengthened by Parfect's own words in the publication, where he states that "But, since I am too far advanced in Years to hope to see such an happy Change, I will pray for it as long as I live, trusting that God, in mercy to his Church..." indicating that by the time he authored this publication, Parfect was not likely to see the benefit and change that he hoped it might inspire.

Parfect had a unique insight into the plight of the clergy, since as a commissioner of The Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy<sup>45</sup> and someone involved in the Sons of the Clergy, he would have understood the plight of many clergy were unable to support themselves or the ministry they were called to perform (as discussed in Chapter Two above). Much of this publication is beyond the work of this thesis as it would require an in-depth review of tithes and the relationship of Queen Ann's Bounty with the Diocese of Rochester. However, one area that is abundantly clear through Parfect's writing is the effect that he believes this has on ministry to the communities served by parishes.

As demonstrated via the other publications, Parfect believed that the Church of England and her clergy had a central role in the reduction of "Vice and Idleness, more Sabbath-breaking, Cursing and Swearing, and filthy Conversation, than the *best* and *wisest* men well know how to encounter".<sup>46</sup> These, Parfect argued, were damaging to the state and could only be rectified until "the *important* Ends of the Ministry, and *just* Expectations of the

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<sup>45</sup> Caleb Parfect, *The Constant Residence of the Clergy upon their Livings shewn to be absolutely necessary for recovering the sinking interests of religion in general, and of the Church of England in particular, etc.* (London: Printed for the Author, 1760.) 73

<sup>46</sup> Ibid 3

Church, might fully be answered”.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, for Parfect, the fact that clergy were struggling to maintain their families and were constantly distracted by fiscal matters meant that time for public and private religious observance was reduced. As a result, the role model of a devout and holy life was missing from many communities. This role model, as seen earlier, was a central part of Bray’s inception of the SPCK, and is a constant found through Parfect’s ministry, who argues that for the incumbent “at his Institution, [the Bishop] committed the *Care* of the Souls of his Parishioners to *him*, and not merely the *Care* that Divine Offices be performed among them...”<sup>48</sup> Consequently, for Parfect ministry was far more than carrying out the offices contained in the Book of Common Prayer; it was a practical and pastoral model that involved intimate connection with the life of all his community and being able to address in pastoral form all those things that he saw as separation from the Godhead.

Hence, for Parfect, everything from the state of the vicarage, the order and cleanliness of the Church, and the presentation of the Chancel were all part of the divine calling of the office which he held. He argues that “he promised, at his Ordination, to be diligent to frame and fashion *himself and family* according to the Doctrine of Christ, and to make both *himself and them*, as much as in him lieth, wholesome Examples, and Patterns to the Flock of Christ; and the *whole* Family is really and truly so”.<sup>49</sup> However, I would suggest that the term family here refers not only to the household unit but also to the extended community. It goes beyond a contemporary understanding of family and evokes a deeper theological understanding of the Abrahamic family in which all are called to be present at the table of the Heavenly Banquet.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid 7

<sup>48</sup> Ibid 92

<sup>49</sup> Ibid 94

For Parfect the essence of ministry was to be “ever careful of, and concerned for, nothing, nor having any thing so much at Heart, as the Welfare and Happiness of His flock”.<sup>50</sup> It was this deep concern that I believe is the foundation of this publication. It is possible to argue that the issue of tithes was of interest to Parfect as a form of social climbing, a way to achieve a higher status in society, to increase the wealth of the family. Although it is hard to completely dismiss these as factors, I believe that for Parfect the issue of the tithe was actually of greater theological importance: that is to say, a poor clergyman could not offer hospitality in its fullest theological sense as found within the Gospels if the clergyman had to spend his day worrying about how to put food on his own table, rather than those of his parishioners.

## Conclusion

In this chapter the six publications that Parfect published over a period of ten years have been explored, the salient points have been drawn out and the central themes have been analysed. The works that Parfect published are quite evidently part of a larger conversation not only in Parfect’s parishes but also in the Church of England as a whole. However, what has been demonstrated is that it is still possible to construct a Theological understanding of Parfect. His ministry was more than the divine offices; it was something that went beyond the pulpit and altar into a lived out practical experience that tried to touch on the whole life of the parish. For Parfect, his understanding of the rites and the traditions of the Church were not something to be hidden behind, but a reality to be lived and explored with the communities that he served. Where there was division over baptism and bowing the knee, Parfect in the Pauline tradition tried to educate and show just cause for his position. In the case of Dr Ibbotson there is a humility exhibited that enters an understanding with all parties in order to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid 97

produce mutual benefit. However, in the case of the Alehouse publication there is no compromise for Parfect; alehouses represented an attack on the Divinely ordained family unit for the benefit of the crown, and for Parfect this is a step too far. For Parfect the family unit is part of the public sanctity of God, and an attack on this is an attack on the Godhead itself. Conversely, in his writing on the Sabbath, Parfect emphasises that although the Sabbath existed for all time and is sanctified for humankind, it is only in attendance of public worship that this sanctity can be achieved. However, for Parfect all this was under threat. He saw issues with the way benefices were subscribed and I would argue that Parfect is prophetic of an issue that even now the Church of England suffers from: that unless Clergy have the means to support themselves adequately, they cannot support their parishioners. If the parishioners cannot be supported, then the communities start to implode and then the state is left to restore order and help the needy. In this Parfect argues that the true calling of the Church is stability of communities through the shared act of worship and praise directed to the Maker and Preserver of all things visible and invisible.

## Conclusion

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”<sup>1</sup>*

*Cor 13:1-3*

This thesis proposed to answer the question of what Parfect’s ministry was like, and to explore whether it is possible to learn anything about the communities that he served from the annotations he left in the parish registers and the publications he wrote. The answer is more complex than I had envisioned at the start of this research. On the face of it, it is possible to say yes it is possible to know what Parfect’s ministry was like, but at the same time there is a resounding no.

One of the constant struggles in completing this research has been the lack of primary and secondary source material, which means anything that has been concluded must be formed by my own hypothesis and trying to interpret Parfect’s point of view within the context of a community that we actually know very little about. There is minimal academic data for the parishes he served in and very little for the Diocese of Rochester as a whole. In order to gain a fuller picture of the communities that Parfect served, this would need to be rectified and would probably involve an inter-disciplinary approach. However, it has been possible to demonstrate several characteristics of Parfect’s ministry as well as provide a

greater understanding of the fledgling workhouse movement at Stroud, and then life in his parishes after he left Stroud in 1733.

Parfect's own beginnings are unclear, and apart from his date of birth and those of his siblings the research has been unable to find anything out about his family. Conversely, the data from the registers has also pointed indirectly to them being on the wealthier side of the Parfect family tree.<sup>1</sup> The Parfects were obviously a large linked family of many generations living in Farmborough at the end of the 16th century; however it is only the Caleb side that seems have moved between Farmborough and Shepton Mallet, meaning that they had the money or the motive. This might be a contributing factor in Parfect attending Oxford but does not explain the education that he may or may not have had before he got there. Whether these are a factor in Parfect's later ministry is unclear, but one of the conclusions that must be drawn is he Parfect had an empathy with the poor which continued throughout his ministry and I believe affected some of the decisions that he made.

However, Parfect was also a true statesman of the church, and arguably put the church first but maintained a sacramental ministry based on the Book of Common Prayer. It is evident that baptism and Holy Communion were central to the Parfect ministry, which went beyond just fulfilling the divine offices. Parfect demonstrated a continued care for all areas of parish life, throughout the whole of his ministry, whether as a schoolmaster in Shrivenham, the Bishop's surrogate for wills or burying paupers in the times of the smallpox epidemics, and what is evident throughout Parfect's writing is that he firmly believed that the shared experience of humanity starts and ends with the Godhead.

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<sup>1</sup> SALSC, Taunton. D/P/Form2/1/1



That though, does not eliminate Parfect from the criticism. The rules he instigated for the workhouse at Stroud were punitive and left little space for the modern understanding of the growth of children and the care that the impotent poor would have needed. There is no difference between the amount of work required in the summer and the amount that was required in the winter. The net result of this was to keep the cost to the vestry to a minimum, and I suspect that further research will show that it kept the profits to a maximum. In that case Parfect was guilty of using forced labour, from a group that had no defence, to keep the vestry in an accustomed lifestyle by reducing the contributions they were required to make to the parish share. It is also questionable whether the strict religious rules that were instituted for the Sabbath achieved anything in real terms. As each workhouse presents a micro-history study, until more work is completed on the workhouses in the Medway Valley this question cannot be fully answered. However, it is fair to say that there is a certain ideology presented in the *Whole duty of man* that is directed at a certain political persuasion, one which reduces the freedom of choice and was rooted in a mid-16th century fight against Puritanism that was perhaps removed from the reality faced by 18th-century children. This ideology also promoted a master / servant relationship based on power and knowing your place in society. One can then argue that in particularly using this text Parfect was being hypocritical. Whilst the children subject to his care in the workhouse were to learn their place in society, Parfect was actively seeking social advancement. If the conclusions drawn from the Farmborough registers are right, and Parfect was the son of a humble weaver, then both of his wives would have offered considerable social advancement. Bennet was the daughter of an influential attorney, which Parfect certainly used to his advantage in the arrangements that he made for the construction of the workhouse at Stroud. If Bennet had not had an untimely death, it is difficult to speculate what Parfect's ministry would have. However, as it was, he chose Bridget Poley as a second wife, and this appears to have given him a certain amount of social

status and leverage. In the Shorne tithe book<sup>2</sup> there are letters between Parfect and George Weller-Poley of Boxted Hall, his brother-in-law, that shows not only the level of acquaintance between them but how Parfect used Weller-Poley's status in order to achieve answers to several problems that he raised concerning tithes and issues within the parish. Throughout the tithe books there is continued evidence of Parfect's connections among the upper echelons of society.

In his will Parfect left considerable wealth for somebody who held the livings of what, according to the King's Books, were two poor parishes. He left four properties, plate, books, and South Sea annuities as well as cash. He also left the right to tithes at Horton-on-the-Hill, Essex and land in Shrivenham.<sup>3</sup> For somebody who held two livings with the combined value of £28 17s 01d, Parfect gained wealth from somewhere; this, again, is an area that requires further research. Both tithe books contain so much information that it has proved impossible to draw anything other than a brief snippet into this thesis. Therefore, I humbly suggest that these should be studied over a greater length of time and in more detail. This will result not only in a greater understanding of Parfect but also build a larger picture of the communities he served. This would be especially useful in the case of Shorne which has a nearly complete set of overseers' accounts for the same period. For the social historian or those with an interest in an economic history, such as vagrancy or poverty these would provide a much-valued source of information.

The same must be argued for the workhouse in Stroud, it has not been possible to explore every avenue for any documentation concerning the missing account books, but

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<sup>2</sup> MALSC, Stroud. P336/27/5

<sup>3</sup> The National Archives, London. PROB 11/962/207

considering how many originals of Parfect's publications still exist with annotations in his own hand, it seems reasonable to argue that either Wickham or Smetham saw value in his work, and therefore it remains highly probable that the account books survive in an archive somewhere. There are also unknown but catalogued documents held in Westminster Abbey,<sup>4</sup> which due to circumstances remain untouched in relation to the research of this thesis. Alongside this there will be valuable insights in the SPCK archive that is held at University of Cambridge Library.

In terms of his publications, then, it is possible to draw stronger conclusions. It is clear that Parfect had a strong Christological and practical theology that was encountered in all aspects of daily life. The rules he left for ringing the bells to indicate the time of the Divine Office and his publication on the Lord's Day show that for Parfect these were solemn and important events that marked each week. These were a point where Temporal time intersected with the world, where the true experience of the lived reality of the Godhead intersected with the community in a very public act of worship that fulfilled two roles. Firstly, it gave due reverence to the Divine being without whose act of creation humankind would not be on the earth. Secondly, it reminded people of the gift of freedom from the bondage of Satan, it allowed then for a moment to sit at the Heavenly Banquet and participate fully in the Godhead who through the Divine providence of His love had released them from the slavery of sin and welcomed them into an eternal and personal relationship with Him. Arguably this is the very message of all Parfect's publications.

His publications on Baptism and Bowing are not theological essays designed to browbeat the laity into acceptance of his theology. They are, in fact, pastoral letters that are

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<sup>4</sup> Westminster Abbey Library and Muniment Room, London. WAM 64415-16 & WAM 64417-19

designed to gently chastise, but also bring a restorative conclusion that saves peoples soul from permanent torment. If anything, they can be seen as texts modelled on the Pauline epistles. Paul fought for the early Jesus movement, demanding

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.<sup>5</sup>

It is arguable that Parfect is doing the same thing. In all reasonableness he could have left the Bolting family to their plight and cast them off, but Parfect showed resilience and humility and kept returning until he was able to administer baptism. He then allowed the unbaptised child to be buried in the Bolting vault in the church, and while these may not be considered exceptional in a post-Christian society, in the 18th century they were important signifiers of Parfect's theology.

The publication on the constant residence of clergy, I argue, is the culmination of a life spent in pastoral ministry. It reflects not only Parfect's view of what has gone wrong with the Church which he quite evidently loves, but also a call for people to be honest and seek a better way: a way more adaptable to the changing times and challenges that lay ahead. During the time of Parfect's ministry and life the Church had faced many challenges from both within and without, but towards the end of his life it faced probably the biggest challenge yet, the rise

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor 3:16-19 KJV

of non-conformity and especially the fledgling Methodist movement. For Parfect though, the Church of England with its unique connection to the state was still the true Church of God, it was the Church that had the cure of souls in every parish and was integral to the communities it served. However, it had a downside: the clergy were poorly remunerated for the task that they did, and it faced corruption from the state and the patrons of benefices that distracted from its true calling. In this publication Parfect recognised these weaknesses, but at the same time he offered guidance on how this might be rectified, so that the Church could fulfil her true calling. It is this insight which I believe gives Parfect an exceptional place within the Diocese of Rochester: his unfailing care for his parishes, his love of the mother Church which he served and his great theological insight into the dangers that Church faced.

I leave the final word to his contemporary who wrote the notification of Parfect's death in the St. James's Chronicle on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1770, the day after Parfect had died at his home in Rochester" "*The Church of England has lost an able advocate, the Clergy of it, a Br[other] most worthy their imitation. His family is deprived of a loving Husband, a kinder Father, & a kind Master, and all who wanted on Strood within the reach of his Benefice, of a generous Friend and Brother.*"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> British Library, London. 4105.aaa.1 1-8

## Appendix 1.

The Cuxton Terrier of Reverend Caleb Parfect 1719 – 1770

*A5 booklet containing 10 pages of which 5 contain text with 1 with a note. (MALSC P108/3/4)*

Terrier of Glebe lands belonging to the Rectory at Cuxton made by the rector, church-wardens and other inhabitants of ye said parish Sept 22 1724 & put then in the Bp registry.

[Fayrrimis] the church yard.

Glean The land where the parsonage house, stable, fodder house & barn stand with ye garden & one home field adjoining in whole by estimation three acres and better, bounded on the north and east with ye high way, on ye west with land of Mr Fandford & south with ye land of Lord Romney. Note ye other home field mentioned in former terriers (containing about 3 roods) is now laid to ye garden & planted with fruit trees xxx

Glean two pieces of land, the one meadow ye other marsh containing together by estimation five acres more or less bounding on the south & west to ye high-way & track leading to seven-sisters, on ye east to ye sea-wall ditch & on ye north to Lord Romney's orchards.

Glean A field containing 7 acres more or less called Poplicon bounded on ye south with ye high-way and on ye west, north & east with Lord Romney's land.

Glean A piece of land called Broadfield [Bradfield] five acres & two roods more or less bounded northward with ye high-way, southward with land belonging to Mr Tafsel, westward with land now in ye occupation of Richard Lewes ye elder & eastward with land belonging to John Clarke.\*

Glean A croft, called pear-tree-croft containing for nention more than two acres bounded at the south with a field called sundrich, on the east, west with lands belonging to Mr Fandford & on ye north with land belonging to Lord Romney.

Glean A piece of land called knock containing 5 acres more or less, bounded northward with land belonging to Mr Ward, & Mr Fourn south and westward with Lord Romney land, eastward partly with ye way leading up to Rainscombe & partly with Longhoo's rood.

Glean A piece of land called Parson's Bush containing two acres & an half butting westward & eastwards on Lord Romney's lands & northward on lands belonging to John Clarke.

Glean 4 acres more or less in the common marsh.

Glean one acre more or less of woodland lying alone upper-bush, butting south & west to Mr Tafsel north & east to Mr Ward & [why bowncl]

This terrier was put in the bishops registry July 20 1733

This terrier was put in the bishops registry July 13 1748

This terrier was put in the bishops registry July 1757 – copy of it in great tithe book.

xxx (opposite first page) Jan 13 1724 Memorandum that these three roods of land were arable (parted by an old hedge) from ye garden when I came to ye rectory & not month [?? ?? ???], being quite out of tillage & being only rampant weeds. After I had ploughed it once, and had no crop I was advised to plant it with codlings & field birds<sup>1</sup>, which I did in ye year 1720.

But the ground being very stony & exceedingly hot all the field birds soon died and ye codlings did not thrive. I planted then about a dozern of choice cherry tree & finding that they liked the soil best. This year took up all the [????????] codlings and planted gascoings in ye room. I likewise trenched ye whole piece & carried out several 100 loads of stones mending ye ways into ye meadow and making a causey with [?? ??] next ye yard. I made a new strong

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<sup>1</sup> It is more than likely this is actually Filberts a form of cobnut which is typically grown in Kent orchards.

hedge next & some & planted a quick all round, put near 300 cascoings & 300 field birds into a nursery. And the whole charge I have been at upon ye loft amounts to upwards of 40l including ye asparagus in ye garden. This planted in 1722 I brought as much old horse dung of Adam of cost 5l 12s and garden being as fed as ye field over run & impoverished with need. Most of ye particulars of this charge may be seen in book ns.

\*(on opposite page) in 1733 in the occupation of Mrs Palmer

Transcribed by Pete Joyce 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019. All spelling and words have been transcribed as accurately as possible, words not able to be transcribed or doubtful have been replaced with [\*\*\*\*].



## Appendix 2.

At a Vestry meeting held in the Parish Church of Strood, on November 15th, 1722, the following articles or rules were agreed to :

I. "That twelve Governours be appointed to direct the affairs of the Workhouse for one whole year; and to report the state of it at a Vestry, to be held once a quarter.\*

II. " That a weekly account be kept, in a book provided for that use, of all disbursements in the said House ; and that the Overseers of the Poor do bring constantly to the quarterly Vestry an account of all their expenses out of the House, to be entered likewise in the said book, for the satisfaction of all the Parishioners.

III. " That a Bill of Fare be given by the Governours to the master and mistress of the House.

IV. " That the Governours visit the House by turns ; two every day ; and that whosoever fails of so doing in person, or by a deputy (substituted out of their own number) shall forfeit six-pence for every such default, to be dispos'd of by a majority of the said Governours.

V. "That certain orders be drawn up, relating to the buying of provisions ; and likewise the behaviour of the people in the House ; that it may not fail to answer the end of it, viz. : to be an House of piety, charity and industry.

VI. "That all proper enquiries be daily made by those, whose turn 'tis to visit the House, relating to the observance of those orders ; and all complaints, grievances, &c., be minuted, in order to be laid before all, or a majority of the Governours

VII "That all the Governours meet at the Workhouse every Sunday, after evening service, to advise together upon the minutes, taken by them the week past, and to agree upon any fresh rules, as they see occasion.

VIII. "That if any difficult case happens, it shall not be determin'd by the two visiting Governours, but referr'd to the weekly meeting; or if it requires immediate dispatch, a majority of the Governours shall be call'd together on that occasion.

IX. "That all resolutions and steps, taken in this affair, be kept in a book at the Workhouse, for the satisfaction of any Parishioners, or the information of such as may be desirous to pursue the same good design in other places.

X. " That the said Governours be diligent, and unanimous in this undertaking, avoid all contradictions and oppositions to one another, and to the rules agreed on amongst themselves : endeavouring to act with such exact harmony, that (tho' it be necessary to decide all controversies by the majority, yet) as far as is possible, ever)' single act of each person may have the consent and approbation of the whole number concerned."

At the same Vestry the following orders to be observed in the House, were agreed to :

I. "That the Bill of Fare be punctually observed by the master and mistress, until any alteration be made therein, by a majority of the Governours.

II. "That if the butcher, who is to serve the House in his turn for a month, or quarter, does not constantly supply it with such pieces of meat, as the Governours think most profitable for the use of it, the two persons who visit on a market day shall go to other shops in the Parish, where they may be best furnish'd.

III. "That all the shops in the Parish have their respective turns to serve the House ; in case they sell as good wares, and as cheap as they do to other people.

IV. "That they always send notes of the weight and price with their goods ; which are to be filed by the master, as soon as he has made proper entries of the said goods in the books of the House.

V. " That all bills be paid once a quarter by the Overseers.

VI. "That the grown people in the House have their respective offices or employments ; and that those offices or employments be appointed by a majority of the Governours.

VII. "That the children spin jersey, and be moderately task'd ; and if they are idle, and do not their tasks, or make great waste, that they go sometimes without their meals, and sometimes have corporal punishment, at the discretion of the master and mistress.

VIII. "That they be at work by six of the clock in the summer, and eight in the winter, and continue so, till they have done their daily tasks.

IX. " That special care be taken to prevent the children making waste ; and that this article be particularly enquir'd into by the visiting Governours.

X. " That fit persons be appointed to reel the work ; and that they do it well and faithfully, without injuring the House or the person who employs them.

XI. " That each child have every day two hours to learn to read, &c., at the discretion of the master and mistress.

XII. "That there be prayers in the House, morning and evening, and a chapter in the bible, distinctly read before prayers ; and that grace before and after meat be always said by one of the children.

XIII. "That certain hours be appointed and observ'd for prayers and meals ; and that none of the House be absent at such times ; and that all go to bed by eight in the winter, and ten in the summer.

XIV. "That all the children, and as many of the grown people, as can be spar'd out of the House, do constantly go to Church on Sundays, Holydays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and carry their bibles and common prayer books with them.

XV. "That neither children nor others, go abroad on Sundays, but continue together in the House, and read some portion of Holy Scripture, or a chapter out of the Whole Duty of Man.

XVI. "That the children be never suffer'd to go into the streets, or to play, unless they behave themselves well in the House and do their tasks.

XVII. "That none (either old or young) presume to go out without the master's or mistress's leave.

XVIII. "That particular care be likewise taken of the education, manners, and behaviour of the children of the Charity School taught in the Workhouse; and that their names be call'd over at seven o'clock in the summer, and eight in the winter half year, every morning, and at one in the afternoon ; and if any be missing, to be put down with notes for tardy, or absent ; and that

great faults, as lying, swearing, stealing, playing at Church, truanting, &c., be also noted down in weekly bills, to be laid before the Governours every Sunday evening.

XIX. "That all the children appear then constantly before the Governours, to show the condition of their cloaths, and to be examined in the progress they make in their learning ; that the master and scholars may have their due commendations, and the benefactors all the comfort they propose to themselves, by encouraging this design.

XX. "Lastly, that the master and mistress use all possible care to promote peace and good order in the House : that they treat the elderly people calmly, and tenderly ; and to lay all material complaints before the Governours without attempting to remove them themselves.

\* These "twelve governors" may be traced as the real origin of the " Strood Trustees."

### Appendix 3.

TITLE	DATE	PUBLISHER	PAGES	BL Shelfmark	REPRINT DATE	REPRINT PUBLISHER	NOTES
Proposals made in the year 1720. To the Parishioners of Stroud, near Rochester in Kent, For Building a work-house there; With an Account of the good Success thereof: And likewise of Several Work-Houses in Essex, &c. Publish'd to encourage all large and populous Parishes to pursue the same Design; it being very advantageous to the Rich, as well as the Poor. By the Minister of Stroud.	1725	J. Downing, in Bartholomew-Close, near West-Smithfield	24	1027.i.31. 104.n.4. 4105.aaa.1.(1.)	N/A	N/A	Published later by the SPCK in [An Account of several Work-houses for employing and maintaining the Poor, setting forth the Rules by which they are governed ... as also of several Charity Schools, for promoting work and labour. (An alphabetical list of Workhouses, etc.)]  Joseph Downing: London, 1725.  BL: C.T.102.(4.)
A letter from a gentleman to the minister of his parish, occasioned By this Minister's never Bowing at the Name of Jesus in the Publick Service of the Church.	1749	Sam. Baker, at Chaucer's-Head, in Russel-Street, Covent-Garden	18	4105.aaa.1.(2.)	N/A	N/A	<b>Digital Copy.</b> Marked British Museum so must be a ADD MS and contained somewhere in the BL possibly in a collection with other MS
Dr. Ibbotson's case shewn to be no sufficient precedent for assessing Parsons, Vicars, &c. to poor-rates for titles they don't occupy, commonly called compositions. In a letter to a gentleman extremely fond of this case. To which is annexed, Another letter, shewing that a Proportion of such Compositions may be claimed to the Day of the Death of the Incumbents, under an Act of Parliament for the more effectual securing the Payment of Rents, &c. made in the 11th Year of his present Majesty King George the Second.	1750	Sam. Baker, at Chaucer's-Head, in Russel-Street, Covent-Garden	24	4105.aaa.1.(3.)	N/A	N/A	<b>Digital Copy.</b> Marked British Museum so must be a ADD MS and contained somewhere in the BL possibly in a collection with other MS

TITLE	DATE	PUBLISHER	PAGES	BL Shelfmark	REPRINT DATE	REPRINT PUBLISHER	NOTES
A Letter from a Clergyman, giving his reasons for refusing to administer baptism in private, by the public form; as desired by a gentleman of his parish.	1754	R. Griffiths London	62	4323.c.17. 4323.c.18. 4105.aaa.1.(4.)	1769	Self Published: London	4105.aaa.1.(4.) MS. corrections [by the author].
The number of alehouses shewn to be extremely pernicious to the publick. In a letter to a Member of Parliament. By the V. of S. in Kent.	1758	Printed by the Author: London	36	103.l.30.	N/A	N/A	Signed on p.16: R.C., i.e. Caleb Parfect.
Laws divine and human, for the observation of the Lord's Day. Illustrated and Enforced BY The Authorities and Sentiments Of Learned Commentators And Other Great and very eminent Authors. By the V- of S-, in Kent.	1759	London : Printed for the Author; sold by R. Baldwin	20	1508/1265.	N/A	N/A	
The constant residence of the clergy upon their livings shewn to be absolutely necessary for recovering the sinking interests of religion in general, and of the Church of England in particular. As also, The most likely, or rather the Only Means proposed, and earnestly recommended, to procure, and firmly fix, such Residence.	1760	London : Printed for the Author, 1760.	98	4106.g.10.	N/A	N/A	
SECONDARY SOURCE CONTAINING CALEB PERFECT'S OWN WRITING							
Letters which passed between Bishop Atterbury, and Mr. Dean Stanhope, on the subject of administring baptism in private by the publick form. First published in the London Magazine. [With an appendix containing the text of an Act for repressing Drunkenness, anno 4 Jac. 1. cap. 5. The editor's covering letter signed: R. C., i.e. Caleb Parfect, Rector of Cuxton.] Ms. note [by the editor].	1758	London	36	4105.aaa.1.(5.) 4105.aaa.1.(8.)			General Reference Collection 4105.aaa.1.(5.) [Another copy. With ms. notes and cuttings from magazines by the editor.]***Wanting the appendix.  Added name STANHOPE, George, Dean of Canterbury.



## Appendix 4.

Caleb Parfect, Rector of Cuxton and Vicar of Shorne, P.C.C. Will dated 4th May 1770

His body "to be interred in the vault made by me in the chancel of Cuxton Church"

To "dear wife" Bridget, all arrears of rent that may be due for the tithes of Hornden, Essex, and dividends of her South Sea Annuities, 10 guineas and 10 more 3 months after his death.

Her share of "articles of housekeeping (specified later), it is his earnest wish that his wife and daughters "live and keep house together". Household goods for their common use (some exceptions), during his wife's life, after her death to daughters, Mary and Martha, equally.

To his above daughters all things they own or have bought or had given to them. "Their board free of all demands to the day of my death". To daughter, Tomlin and daughter Martha the plate remaining.

To daughter Tomlin, 10 guineas for mourning, "which I hope will be cordially accepted for the time, care and pains I took in the management of Mr Tomlin's affairs for her and Mrs Dives service and benefit, in lieu of anything further unless there had been larger room for it"?

Freehold estate at Barrow Hill and near it, in the parish of Famburrough in Somerset, in possession of Messrs Gibbs, Adams, Wegg? And Bush, to daughter Martha for life, subject to the discharge of a mortgage made to daughters, Elizabeth Tomlin and Mary Parfect, for the security of £1,000 and interest to an annuity of £20. After death of Martha to her child/children. If none then to son John, subject to above mortgage and interest conditions above, if no issue, to daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, after theirs deaths to Ann Porter, Spinster of Charlton, near Bristol and John Collier? Of Leigh near Pensford Grund?, children of late brother William Parfect and to Ann Colley daughter of his sister Ann Biggs, widow of Camerton, near Bath; and to James Biggs the Younger , grandson of sister Ann Biggs ; and to Caleb Witchol and his sister, wife of Brookman of Loud? Street in Somerset, grandchildren of

his sister Witchol, widow of Famburrough, equally, subject to discharge of mortgage. Son John and daughter Martha to have full powers to raise money to discharge mortgage if it has not been done. They can sell sufficient land to accomplish this. Estate subject to payment of annuity of £20 to daughter, Mary for life. In default of annuity Mary can enter upon the estate for redress.

To daughter Martha the fee simple of his property in Strood, late in occupation of Wurdling? Gis....?, now of F..... ?

To niece Hannah Singer wife of Bennet Singer of Famburrough, his house and garden in the east end of the said parish, for life. Then to eldest son, on condition that they always discharge the "Lord's Rent".

To son John £50 out of the South Sea annuities in his name but belonging to his father. If daughter Tomlin survives him (C.P.) and bond given by son John, not all accounted for by me, to his daughter Elizabeth Tomlin "so much as may remain unpaid of said bond of £100, to daughter Tomlin and her daughter Mrs Dives ("who is to be satisfied by her mother for so much as she has received of me for her use"), should be [reimbursed ?] out of the remainder of his South Sea annuities.

All his books and papers to son John, if he has a son and is bought up a scholar, to main part to him.

Son John and daughters Mary and Martha are joint executors and are to get in arrears of rents and tithes to buy mourning, and towards housekeeping for one quarter for all the family, they to settle it among themselves, in a prudent and respectable manner, and that his son will "ever be doing his best offices for this happy purpose", so he may, "without envy" give him his "cabinet in the best chamber with the best china, on or under it, and on the mantelpiece". "His mother had given him some reason to expect them".

Residue of personal estate (excepting that already given) and after the quarters housekeeping, to his daughters Mary and Martha, equally. Provision of coals that happen to be in the house for common use.

Witnesses: Charles Allen, Robert Fountaine and William Nichols

Proved at London, 10th December 1770

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